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African famine worsened by AIDS, mismanagement

Alan Doerksen

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. — A food shortage in southern Africa is shaping up to be the worst famine that region has faced in 10 years. As the situation worsens, relief agencies such as World Vision, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) are stepping up their short-term relief efforts.

Persistent drought conditions, erratic rainfall, government inefficiency, and the devastation caused by AIDS are all factors Christian relief agencies point to as contributing to the crisis.

World Vision estimates that up to 19 million people could be affected by the drought in the coming months in Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Swaziland.

No rain, no harvest

"This should be a time of plenty in Malawi," says Miriam Wiebe, who has worked for World Vision in Malawi as a nutritionist for the

past three years. "The annual harvest is usually time for celebration, but this year the situation is horrible. No rain means no harvest. Many people have already died, and thousands more will if something isn't done soon."

No coping mechanisms

Wiebe is currently in Canada, and will return to Malawi in August. She told *Christian Courier* that in Malawi "in the past two-and-a-half years, we've had very erratic rainfall." Although there were heavy rains last year before crops were planted, there was little rain afterward. As a result, this year Malawian farmers "don't have any coping mechanisms" — such as leftover seeds or livestock to sell to pay for food.

Another problem facing Malawian farmers is "there's a huge dependency on one crop: maize [corn]," explains Wiebe. But AIDS is another root problem. "Malawi has one of the highest AIDS rates in the world," reports

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Mazunzo Dhaka, a World Vision staff person (left), sits with Yosefe at St. Gabriel's Hospital in central Malawi. His mother (right), who walked for six hours from her village, brought Yosefe seeking treatment for the child who is barely over one-year of age, to the hospital.

Politics puts Ontario education tax credit increase on hold

Alan Doerksen

ANCASTER, Ont. — Christian educators in Ontario are disappointed that the provincial government has decided to postpone for a year a planned increase in the Equity in Education Tax Credit.

When the Ontario government introduced the tax credit last year, families were offered a tax credit for 10 per cent of school tuition costs, with a maximum value of \$700 for each eligible child. The original plan was to increase that amount by an extra 10 per cent each year up to 50 per cent (or \$3,500 per student maximum), when the credit was to be fully implemented in 2006.

But in her June 17 budget speech, Finance Minister Janet Ecker announced that the tax credit implementation schedule would be

ANDREW VAUGHAN/CANADIAN PRESS
Ontario Finance Minister Janet Ecker

that, for the next year, parents of eligible students will still be able to claim 10 per cent of costs, rather than the expected rate of 20 per cent.

Political considerations

"OACS is disappointed that the commitment made by the premier during the recent leadership campaign — to implement the tax credit as legislated — has apparently taken a back seat to political considerations," stated OACS in a press release. Ecker's announcement "made one thing perfectly clear: Christian school parents and supporters of educational choice everywhere must continue to participate in the political process in this province."

John Vanasselt, director of communications for OACS, says

COURTESY HILDA ROUKEMA
Hilda Roukema

for this reason, and it would be back on track for next budget."

OACS was surprised by the government move, says Vanasselt. "We had no indication anything was up for grabs with this budget." The decision "doesn't make much sense." He has been in touch with the government and reports, "We've expressed our disappointment. All the candidates in the leadership campaign gave their assurance this would be implemented." He referred to the recent Ontario Progressive Conservative leadership campaign, in which Ernie Eves was elected as the new leader and premier.

The government's decision will hurt lower income and multi-child families the most, asserts Vanasselt.

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interrupted for one year, reports the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS). The result is

one reason the government made this decision was as "part of a larger plan to delay tax cuts.... I spoke with Janet Ecker. She reassured me this was simply a delay

News

Relief agencies help stave off famine in southern Africa

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Wiebe. Together, these two factors "make for a very miserable situation."

Wiebe has observed big changes in day-to-day life in Malawi as a result of the famine. When she first went to the country, she saw lots of activity, but now the country is "like a ghost town." As the largest non-governmental organization (NGO) working in Malawi, World Vision is working with the World Food Organization to provide rations such as corn, oil and beans to Malawians, says Wiebe. World Vision is also supplying seeds, fertilizers and training to help that country's farmers get back on their feet. The agency is also doing advocacy with the Malawian government and is looking for strong support from the government. Wiebe notes that the Malawian president declared the country to be in a "national state of disaster" on February 28, and has asked for international help – but these things took awhile.

Emergency relief 'absolute priority'

In addition to emergency relief, World Vision is developing plans for long-term relief in the region, explains Wiebe.

World Vision Canada (WVC) president Dave Toyzen reports, on the agency's website, "World Vision is doing our best to tackle the

longer term issues that affect children in poverty, but right now, emergency assistance is the absolute priority....

"The region already suffers from the highest incidence of HIV in the world.... The region is therefore interfaced with twin crises, hunger and HIV/AIDS. This is the worst food shortage in a decade. The last of its kind was in 1991/92."

According to WVC, high rates of AIDS in the region have led to increased loss of productive labor, and therefore reduced quality acreage; and led to increased dependency ratios (the sick, orphans, etc.). Those suffering from malnutrition and HIV/AIDS are increasingly susceptible to diseases like cholera and malaria.

Political factors

Some political factors have aggravated the crisis, reports WVC. These include:

- The breakdown of law and order in Zimbabwe. This has led to the withdrawal of significant donor support, and is threatening the collapse of the economy.
- Depletion of strategic reserves (in both Malawi and Zambia).
- Governments' delay in timely importation of grain.

Zimbabwe, until recently, was the bread basket of the region until Mugabe gave the green light for vi-

olent farm seizures from white farmers. Recently he ordered the seizure of the remaining 4,000 or so white farms. Many of the farms seized are producing little or nothing. Instead of being a food exporter, Zimbabwe now lacks the resources to feed itself.

Last year Malawi sold its entire national grain reserve, pushing down the local price of grain so steeply that many farmers were forced to plant other crops to make a profit. The corrupt regime squandered the money, according to a report on Africa published in *The Globe and Mail*.

'We heard fear'

MCC's co-director of Africa programs, Tesfa Dalelew, traveled in May to Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, and also gives a bleak report about the situation. "We heard fear," he reported in a press release. "People's crops did not make it. What food they have now will not last long."

In those three countries "where the famine is looming, if we don't do something now, there will be a crisis," Dalelew asserted, in an interview with *Christian Courier*. "For those who don't have anything now, they're already in famine." Other Africans, who have some supplies, will feel the effects of the famine later. MCC is focusing on helping those three countries, as well as Zimbabwe – the countries MCC believes are feeling the worst effects of the famine.

Dalelew believes the primary reason for the famine is the ongoing drought. For farmers in the region, "losing their seeds twice is a very serious business. We saw scorched corn fields – from farm to farm, it was like that."

He witnessed people eating grass seeds and banana roots to survive. But banana roots are giving people there dysentery, says Dalelew.

To help resolve the crisis, MCC has identified partner agencies in the region and is starting to send shipments of grain from neighboring African countries and from overseas to southern Africa. MCC is also shipping in clothing, school supplies, other food supplies, and seeds for the next planting season.

Fighting to overcome

While visiting southern Africa recently, Dalelew was impressed by the way people showed "human dignity" in their struggle to survive. "They are fighting to overcome" the famine.

Some Africans told him "lack of management on the part of some governments" was one reason for the famine. But he adds that war is

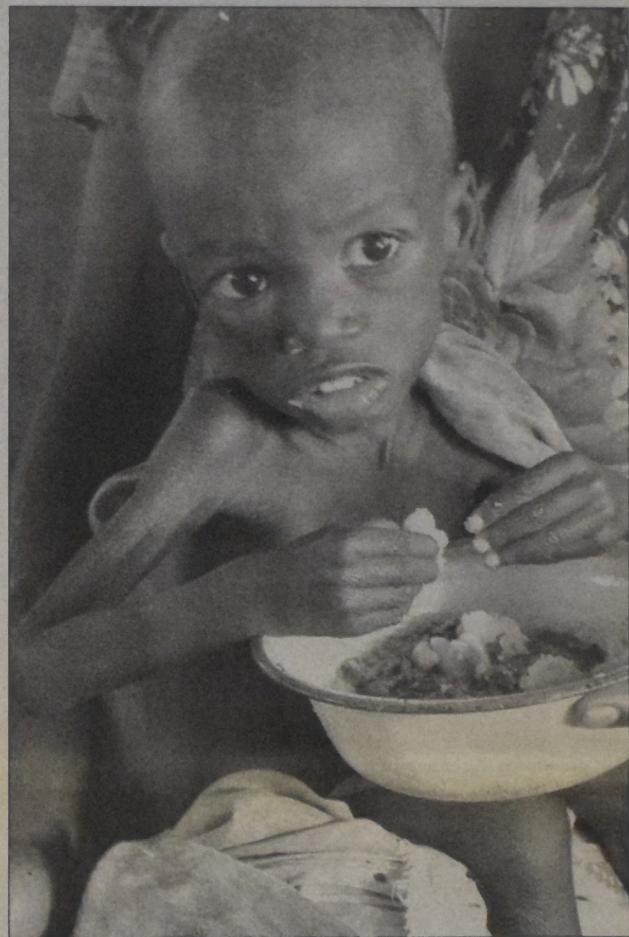


PHOTO COURTESY OF WORLD VISION CANADA, PHOTOGRAPHER PHILIP MAHER

His mother, who made the day journeyed by foot, brought Chisomo (above), two-years-old, to St. Gabriel's Mission Hospital in central Malawi for medical attention for malnutrition.

not a problem in the region. "In all those four countries, there's peace, thank God."

We can, we must help

As *Christian Courier* reported in our July 1 issue, CRWRC is also responding to the crisis in southern Africa by working with African agencies to distribute food, and will follow up that project with a seed distribution program for farmers later this year.

"CRWRC is preparing one of the largest food responses in our history," reports the agency on its website. "Working with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, 4,200 metric tonnes of food supplies will be distributed to hungry families in Malawi, Zambia and Northern Mozambique. CRWRC will be working with African churches and organizations in order to implement food programs throughout targeted villages in the region. Programs will vary from emergency food distribution, seeds and tools distributions, Food for Work, and feeding programs for severely

malnourished children under the age of five."

In Malawi, "over three million people will be in need of food aid by September," reports Janet Janz – CRWRC's disaster response and preparedness co-ordinator for the region (based in Nairobi, Kenya) in a CRWRC press release.

"One in five Malawians is infected [with AIDS] and without access to expensive drugs, will die within two years. The age group most affected is the 25 - 40 year olds, who are also the most productive in society and the most likely to have young children relying on them."

"What can we do? We can give food aid to help people get through this immediate food shortage. We can give seeds for next year and encourage people to farm communally so household labor gaps can be met by helping each other out.... We can keep thinking of new ideas. We can and we must."

Government decision causes disappointment

... continued from page 1

OACS has written to the premier, asking for "written assurances" that the tax credit will continue to be implemented.

Eves was hesitant

Hank Hultink, executive director of the Ontario Christian School Teachers Association (OCSTA), believes Premier Eves is behind the decision to delay the tax credit increase. In the recent leadership campaign, many Christians supported Jim Flaherty rather than Eves, observes Hultink. Flaherty fully supported the tax credit, but Hultink notes that Eves was hesitant about it. But after winning the

party leadership and seeing the strength of support for the tax credit, "Eves looked around and said, 'If this issue has support, we can't discard or dump it,'" speculates Hultink. "He's not going to cancel it.... What he doesn't want is controversy." Rather, Eves wants to build a higher profile with the public, says Hultink.

Hilda Roukema, principal of John Knox Christian School in Brampton, Ont., and incoming executive director of OCSTA, says "I'm disappointed that Ernie Eves is going back on his word." This is a disappointment for all supporters of the Christian school movement, she adds.

She doesn't expect OCSTA to take action on this issue, because this is "more of an Alliance [OACS] thing," but she encourages individual teachers to do so. OCSTA supported Flaherty in the recent leadership campaign, Roukema notes.

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News/Politics

Same-sex decision divides Canadian Anglicans



DIOCESE OF NEW WESTMINSTER

New Westminster Bishop Michael Ingham.

Alan Doerksen

NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C. — The decision by the Anglican church's New Westminster diocese to approve same-sex blessings is having a divisive effect on that church, with possible international repercussions on the horizon.

At the mid-June meetings of the diocese synod, 63 per cent voted in favor of blessing the unions of gay and lesbian couples. The blessings are not considered on the same level as a marriage.

'Pastoral emergency'

Following the announcement of the results of the vote, Rev. Trevor Walters (St. Matthew's, Abbotsford) rose to withdraw his own motion which asked for the creation of a non-geographical diocese within New Westminster for traditional Anglicans. He then declared a state of "pastoral emergency" and walked out of synod, along with some members from nine congregations, reports the Anglican Church of Canada website.

The dramatic step in 25 years of discussion on greater inclusion of gays and lesbians in the Anglican Church of Canada brought some synod members to tears — both out of jubilation for gay and lesbian members and sadness at the departure of fellow Anglicans.

"My reaction is shock," said Rev. Trevor Fisher (St. Francis-in-the-Wood), who said his parish will not be asking for permission to perform same-sex blessings. "If you were going to write the worst possible outcome, this would be it."

Before walking out of synod, Walters called the vote schismatic, "a tragic moment in history," and described New Westminster as a "rebel diocese." Outside synod moments later, he said the nine parishes that walked out and "members of at least six other

parishes" are in touch with primates of Anglican provinces worldwide and will decide their future soon, reports the Anglican Church website.

The nine churches, he said, are some of the largest in the diocese and contribute 24 per cent of its budget. Those walking out are generally represented by the Essentials group, a network of traditional, conservative-minded Anglicans.

Neale Adams, communications officer of the diocese, said that while members of congregations are free to leave the church, parishes cannot. "If members leave, then the remaining members are the parish and they maintain the facilities. This is not a congregational church."

Bishops condemn decision

The same-sex blessing decision was also condemned by 13 Canadian bishops, who issued a statement expressing "regret" over the decision, which they said is "in conflict with the moral teaching of Holy Scripture and the tradition of the universal Church," reports ENS. They said that "matters of moral teaching and Church order and discipline are beyond the jurisdiction of a single diocese acting alone.... It can only cause confusion for a local expression of the Church to purport to bless that which Anglicans globally and nationally have decided they cannot bless." They called on the diocese to "withhold implementation" of the motion, and called on "all Anglicans to be loyal to Scripture, and to work patiently for reconciliation...."

And a letter signed by five current and two retired primates from the Anglican Communion, sent before the vote, warned, "It is important that you understand that the adoption of blessing of same-sex unions by your diocesan synod would be viewed not only as a grave affront but will also set in motion deliberations on breaking communion" with other dioceses around the world.

Pleading for unity

The archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey, and the primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Michael Peers, wrote letters that pleaded for unity, reports ENI.

Responding to an appeal from Walters, Carey wrote that he had "no doubt that the unity of the [Anglican] Communion is threatened by your Synod's decision." Carey regretted the group's decision to walk out of the synod and was alarmed by "statements of those who appear to be determined

to look elsewhere for episcopal oversight."

Don't walk away

Carey wrote, "I believe firmly that we should 'speak the truth in love' to each other, on these and many other issues — but I believe that we do so most effectively by standing our ground in continuing dialogue and ongoing fellowship with each other, not by walking away."

But he affirmed his support for the resolution passed in 1998 by the world's Anglican bishops at the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, saying: "I do not accept that homosexual relationships can

be treated as being on a par with the man-woman ideal portrayed in Holy Scripture."

The Lambeth Conference stated that it could not "advise the legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions" and declared "homosexual practice" to be "incompatible with Scripture."

"It saddens me deeply that any diocese should be following a course at odds with the Lambeth Conference resolution," wrote Carey.

The protesting congregations, now calling themselves "the See ANGLICANS page 9..."



ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA WEBSITE

Archbishop Michael Peers

Canada should upgrade its military



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

In contrast to our southern neighbors, Canadians are not notably preoccupied with issues of national defence and foreign policy. Public opinion polls repeatedly indicate that we are more concerned with health care, unemployment and other domestic issues. However, after the events of last September, this will likely have to change.

To begin with, in May the Minister of National Defence announced that ground troops in Afghanistan would be recalled in mid-summer and would not be replaced. This decision was made in tacit recognition that available Canadian forces are insufficient for the sort of long-term operation needed to combat al-Qaeda terrorists.

In the second place, the C. D. Howe Institute has recently published an analysis by J. L. Granatstein arguing that "Canada is now all but undefended at a time of danger." The report points out that this country's defence spending per capita is less than half the average of other NATO member states and that we rely too heavily on the protective umbrella of the United States, to the endangerment of our own sovereignty.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., the Bush administration looks set to raise the recently-established Office of Homeland Security to the level of a full-fledged Cabinet department headed by a Secretary subject to Congressional approval. However, as more than one observer has pointed out, this creates something of a bureaucratic redundancy, since the much older Defence Department should already be securing the American homeland.

James W. Skillen, head of the Annapolis, Maryland-based Center for Public Justice, points out that the Defence Department is spread too thin and in effect functions as the defence system for large swaths of the globe. In the 2002-2003 budget, the increase in American defence spending exceeds the combined defence budgets of several other major countries. In Skillen's words, "the United States alone holds a global military hegemony."

Underscoring a central contradiction

This underscores a central contradiction in Canadian foreign and military policy. On the one

hand, we tend to support multilateral initiatives, such as the land mines treaty and global environmental protection agreements, while (often rightly) criticizing the United States for taking a more unilateral approach governed by its own narrow interests. On the other hand, however, our governments' budgetary priorities repeatedly indicate that we take our own defensive capabilities less than fully seriously and that we are apparently willing to live under Washington's protection — and thus inevitably be subject to its foreign policy agenda.

Military policy criticized by both sides

Not surprisingly, this American global hegemony is resented by much of the rest of the world. We Canadians complain about it, along with everyone else. In the U.S., itself, there is growing discontent over the fact that American troops are doing everything except, it seems, making their homeland secure. Although the most vocal about this anomaly are currently on the "far right" (Pat Buchanan and Joseph Sobran) and the "far left" (Noam Chomsky), it is unlikely that moderate public opinion will tolerate a lengthy and ill-defined military effort in which the United States is left to carry most of the burden, particularly as another wave of NATO expansion seems likely.

A global American empire is not a good thing, as even Americans are beginning to recognize. Yet those disliking American "global hegemony" and its associated unilateralism must be prepared to pay the price for a more balanced collective security in the international arena. For Canada, this means that we must be prepared to upgrade our military capabilities, which necessarily requires spending more

money. After all, an equitable international realm requires that states have sufficient power to act justly in concert with other states.



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Editorial

On a path of theological musing

Harry der Nederlanden

The columns by Mary Hulst and Sini den Otter set me on a path of theological musing this week. Our Reformed forefathers often warned against theological speculation, while doing quite a lot of it themselves. Speculation meant going beyond the Scriptural givens and blazing your own trail into logical thickets, dense and dangerous as a briar patch. But musing isn't serious; it's playful — just allowing the images and metaphors to interact in your mind like dogs romping in the park.

The image of dogs, of course, I picked up from Mary's column. Her dog's passion for chasing rabbits, which she sees as part of his baser self, leads her into chasing the doctrine of total depravity. That's musing. Also amusing. It's an analogy — putting two different word-worlds side by side to watch the sparks fly between. An analogy, they say, is never a perfect match. But that's part of the fireworks.

If you follow an analogy too far, you end up treading space. That's what I did. 'Is chasing rabbits not part of the dog's very creatureliness?' I asked myself. We don't consider it really base of a dog to do that. Our cats occasionally drop a mouse on our doorstep as if to repay us for the big bags of dry cat food we dish out for them. I don't send for the cat police or worry about owning a criminally inclined cat and sending her to a cat therapist. Dogs and cats are pets, but their ancestors were predators. At one time they didn't have

well-trained human beings for butlers and maids. They had to chase their own protein. Hunting is part of their primal nature.

When they enter into our world as pets, we impose more civilized behavior on them. Having blood drip off our jaws from flesh that is still quivering with life is simply not politically correct. It has to be cooked and packaged first so we can eat it without savage thoughts of mutilation and death to spoil our refined appetites.

Part of the function of civilization is to place a huge gulf between ourselves and the animals. It is there to imprint on us the fact that we do not live by instinct but by another law. Darwin and others challenged that separation. Or at least they portrayed it as a gulf of our own making. The theologians (some of them) took exception to that: they argued that according to Scripture it's a gulf of God's making. Unlike the animals, we were made in God's image. And they've been quarreling to the present day about what that means.

Cornelius van Til, the great Reformed theologian who taught at Westminster Theological Seminary for decades, never tired of telling us that what is wrong with us is not that we are finite, earthly, limited, frail and time-bound creatures. That's how God made us. And God looked us over and said, "Excellent! Wonderful! A masterpiece!" And proudly put his signature on us. What is wrong with us, stressed Van Til, is that we rebelled against God.

God does not treat us like pets

To get back to our rabbit-chasing dog, God does not hold our creatureliness against us. We are not called to repress or overcome part of our created humanity. God does not treat us like dogs. He does not want to civilize us and turn us into pets. He wants us to stop being rebellious and, admit that when we seek to live without infusions of his love, life becomes brutish and unbearable. Animals with their "base" instincts never made a mess of this planet; fallen, rebellious human beings did. And they did it by trying to make it infinitely better, by striving to bring it all into the realm of the civilized, the realm of "sweetness and light" (Matthew Arnold).

This brings me to Sini den Otter's column, particularly her solution to Paul's snarky admonition to women to put a sock in it, at least at church gatherings. She plays off Paul against Jesus — something Reformed theology has always warned against. Not just because it doesn't work (Jesus was no less bound by traditions of male leadership in his selection of apostles), but because it undermines our respect for Scripture. If we can deal so lightly with the authority of Paul, why not do the same with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? After all, the gospels are later than the epistles. Remember, we don't have transcripts of Jesus' words and deeds. All we have is the testimonies of the apostles. If we can't trust them, if we have to put them through the sifter of our own civilization, all we end up with is shadows of ourselves.

Paul's teachings vs. those of Jesus

Paul's teachings have often been played off against those of Jesus, usually in terms unfavorable to Paul. Paul becomes the stick-in-the-mud who institutionalizes the gospel of the Kingdom and hems it about with inflexible structures and strictures. Jesus, on the other hand, is the liberating revolutionary who thumbs his nose at the Pharisees, those proto-fascists of law and

order. Paul represents a movement backwards, from life to rigor mortis.

In theology today, the contrast is located in the gospels themselves. The "historical Jesus" is played off against the Christ of the early church. The latter is crusted over with dreams, dogma and superstition (and the teachings of Paul's epistles). That's what we get in the Bible. Only a well-trained theologian armed with critical tools created in the nineteenth century can sift out the authentic sayings of Jesus from the encrustations of the early church.

Behind the "quest for the historical Jesus" is a suspicion about Jesus' capacity to infuse himself into the life of the church. I don't believe the so-called "higher critics" set out to belittle the Jesus Christ of Scripture. On the contrary, they sought to save him from being co-opted by the dull, routinized, domesticated, middle-class mind of the church. They looked about at the petty, dutiful, politically correct church of their day (and ours) and listened to the whisper of Screwtape telling them that Jesus wouldn't have anything to do with such a bunch of duds. There is nothing authentic, world-transforming, truly liberating or life-affirming in these pallid creatures with their rigid traditions, dogmas and institutions.

The philosophers from Plato to Kant and Hegel had taught deep thinkers to dream of a way of being human that is much, much more profound than a divinity gross enough to incarnate himself in such an ordinary crowd. Certainly Jesus stood for something much more mystical, profound and... well, different, wholly different, from how the church has represented him.

Usually the way we tell the story is that the liberals sought to reduce the Jesus Christ of the Bible to just another man among men. I think the opposite is true. They sought to find a Jesus who lived up to their high ideal of humanity, to say nothing of divinity. Any god who is like the middle-class "us", say the deep thinkers, can't be much of a god. So they summoned up one who is vastly Other. By the time you've thought up such a god by the power of your own reason, of course, you're only a step away from discovering that you — your mind — is god.

Joining himself to his people

But Jesus' entire mission from incarnation to resurrection and ascension is marked by the goal of joining himself to his people. By his Spirit we become his witnesses, his presence, his body. That's what the sacraments say. That's what the gospels and epistles say. We don't save Jesus by keeping him from being contaminated by our finite humanity, our history, the ordinary rhythms of the life of his people, the church; by segregating him and idealizing him, we end up with a shadow of ourselves and we end up turning ourselves into shadows rather than reflections of the true God.

God has not kept himself distant from us, but by his Son and Spirit has woven himself, body and blood, into the personal, social, political and historical fabric of our humanity. We see the beginning of that in the gospels. Already there we have a Savior fully engrafted into and contaminated by our creatureliness. This makes it hard for us to disentangle cultural accommodation from cultural redemption, and the creaturely, cultural impediments from the rebellious. But who said it would be easy?

He said, Take up your cross and follow....

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Letters

Just a bump in the road?!

I was moved by the cry from the heart written by Co Vanderlaan, "Missed Opportunities-Edmonton Christian Schools On Strike" as well as the profound anguish expressed by the anonymous "Edmonton Teacher Warns Against Alliances With Public Schools", CC June 17, 2002.

What stood out in the first piece was the fact that the writer did not distance himself from a situation of which he obviously was not the author but urged "the Christian School Board to now begin a dialogue in its support community over what it means to be an alternative within the public system."

What stood out in the anonymous article were the statements "There are no friends to Christians in the secular trade unions and those who support them politically" and "the aggressively anti-Christian atmosphere the public schools have become."

Both authors seem well qualified to write on the matter at hand.

Breaking the deafening silence

Together with the article "Strike Is A Bump On The Road Of Publicly Funded Christian Schools," CC March 11, 2002, these break the deafening silence that followed my letter "Vision for Sale?" published in the June 28, 1999, issue of CC. The nub of my question was to ask ourselves whether indeed, rather, whether *"in deed"*, our various Christian institutions are pointing "to the Kingdom yet to come and already here."

In short, to support that contention, I attempted to contrast the situation in

Edmonton with the Ontario experience insofar as it relates to the matter of teachers joining a labor union.

In Edmonton, the teachers and support staff were "forced" to join the ATA and CUPE respectively, all with the approval, silent or otherwise, of the Christian School Board and the supporting community. That was the price to pay. They since *"had"* to go on strike, the word *"No"* did not seem to have come up.

In Ontario, on the other hand, the OACS and OCSTA were "not pleased" with Christian schoolteachers joining a Christian union. One local Christian school board did all it could to prevent its staff from being represented, thus successfully depriving the teachers of their legal rights.

One group deprived of its legal rights, the other not exercising its legal right to refrain from striking, all provided in law.

The sad thing is that the Edmonton dilemma was entirely foreseeable.

Thankfully, an other group of Christian teachers in the St. Catharines school community was able to arrive at an agreement that works!

How do we model biblical principles?

My overall question still is: "How do we 'model', live out as best we can, the biblical principles we profess?" Events in Edmonton as well as the 'anonymous' analysis have shown that we have not done too well putting principles into practice.

Specifically, I would suggest that the Edmonton strike was not a mere "bump in the road."

Rather, it points to the phenomenon experienced by myself and many other males when we have mistakenly taken the wrong highway and are loath to admit this.

At some point we have to say "Oops, wrong direction, let's go back to where we

came from."

As a start I would urge sisters and brothers to take Vanderlaan up on his suggestion.

Who knows, we might even admit: "Oops, wrong road!"

May God give the vision and the wisdom to act as a Christian Community.

Hank Kuntz
Etobicoke, Ont.

What were our failures?

In "Edmonton Christian Schools on Strike," Co Vanderlaan rightly argues that the Edmonton Christian School community missed a big opportunity to live for Jesus in this secular society by our response to the Alberta Teacher's Association (ATA) strike.

Vanderlaan argues that the Christian School Board, teachers, parents and larger Christian School Society "had ample opportunity to pull together the expertise residing in the support community needed to draft a response that reflected a Christian approach." We should "have developed clear responses to all of the issues giving rise to the strike."

What were our failures? We failed to follow a healthy process, in response to the impending strike, and did not involve the full Christian community in discussions on how God might want us to respond to this challenge. We failed to properly and publicly affirm the good points of the ATA and Alberta government positions, while taking a principled stance against the adversarial character of the strike, the materialism of the negotiations, and the power-mongering on both sides. We also failed to identify the legal and structural realities that place our school in this very difficult situation, and to initiate the long-term political action needed to improve these structures.

Why did we miss this opportunity? I

doubt any of us believed the strike was unimportant. So, why were we so passive and compliant? I, too, stand guilty of not having initiated communal discussion.

Vanderlaan does the Christian community a big service by inviting communal Christian dialogue about the crucial issues arising from the ATA strike. But, we also need the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to live *Coram Deo* in many other areas now that we are an alternative Christian program within the public school system.

Whether we steer through labor problems, develop Christian curriculum, hire support staff, teachers or principals, buy textbooks, or lobby for educational justice, we must ask how this can be done faithfully. This will require ongoing, communal Christian reflection.

More helpful information on the types of issues that alternative Christian programs within public boards will need to solve is available in the report by Prairie Association of Christian Schools (formerly CSI District 11): "The Alternative School Model: New Challenges for Christian Schools," available at <http://www.kingsu.ab.ca/pacs/>.

John Hiemstra
Associate Professor of Political Science
The King's University College
Edmonton, Alta.

Alberta claws back benefits

I thought you might be interested to know the extent to which the Alberta government is unwilling — certainly not unable — to assist the poorest of the poor in Alberta. Even when the federal government attempts to assist families with children get out of poverty through the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS), the Alberta government arranges to claw back the full amount of this federal funding. The net effect is that the welfare benefit remains the same, while the Alberta government manages to spend less money each year.

For instance, this year, beginning about now, the federal government increased the NCBS to a single parent family with two children, by the amount of \$6.00 a month. The Alberta government however, has recently passed an Order in Council (a Cabinet decision with legal force) clawing back the full amount of the \$6.00 benefit from the poorest of the poor. It's only in Alberta that the poorest of the poor must still find a grocery store selling its products at 1993 prices.

By the way, the Alberta Government recently reported a fiscal year end surplus of \$772 million. The expected surplus for the 2002/2003 fiscal period is somewhere around \$4.0 billion at current gas and oil prices.

Jake Kuiken
Calgary, Alberta

Freudian slip?

Was it a Freudian slip
In your editorship
Or did you intend to purge
In Christian Courier Word Search
The fame of the Bert Hielema Name?

Kind greetings from the Velthuizens in Guelph, Ont.

For a quick Letter to the Editor, please send it by fax to: (905)-682-8313, or by e-mail to: editor@christiancourier.ca

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Education

Religious tradition crucially relevant in Christian higher ed

Marc C. Whitt

PANAMA CITY, Fla. (BP) — "A serious Christian college or university insists that its religious tradition — its vision, ethos and persons who carry them — is crucially relevant to all the facets of the life of the school," said Robert Benne of Roanoke College during the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

"A Christian college or university has to gather enough intense believers in the tradition's vision — its comprehensiveness, centrality and unsurpassability — to make that vision the organizing principle or paradigm of the life of the college or university," Benne said in his H.I. Hester Lectures during the association's June 1-4 sessions in Panama City, Fla.

"It also has to have enough intense believers to model the tradition's ethos within the life of the school as its dominant way of life, though it may make room for other ways of life," asserted Benne, professor of religion and director of Roanoke College's Center for Religion and Society and author of the book *Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Christian Traditions*.

Benne said he wrote the book in response to the "pervasive pessimism of the literature of the 1990s on the secularization of the church's schools."

Continued commitment to Christianity

In his book, Benne cited Baylor University, Calvin College, Notre Dame University, St. Olaf University, Valparaiso University and Wheaton College for their continued commitment to their Christianity and church-based traditions.

"These schools' faithful relation to their religious tradition has given them a coherent vision for shaping the life and mission of their school and thereby to form the intellectual, moral and spiritual lives of the students who go there," Benne said.

Christian colleges and universities serious about their Christian mission have characteristics worth noting, he said. Among them are their "rich connections with their church constituency for students, faculty, money and proper influence; an unabashed presentation of themselves as Christian in a specific way; and they hire according to their mission all the way down to the grounds crew."

Benne explained, "These schools have real character. They

are descript, not generic. Serious Christian colleges and universities have a living engagement of faith and learning."

Be vigilant

Benne encouraged the 250-plus Southern Baptist college and university presidents and administrators to be vigilant in maintaining their institutions' mission of Christian education despite the "powerful forces of overt and covert secularization."

"[As administrators] ask yourselves, 'What resources do we have to shape our identity and mission so that we might fend off the powerful forces of secularism, and how can we draw upon those resources?'" Benne counseled.

Good for us to struggle

"We in Christian education never will be able to escape the struggle completely of secularism, nor should we. To be free of the struggle would mean either we are no longer in touch with the world God has given us to work in or we have become unduly accommodating to it, so it is good for us to struggle as Christian institutions. Take your calling seriously, and the cross will find you."

Benne called on Southern Baptist college and university presidents and administrators to "maintain the soul" of Christian higher education without being drawn away by the ongoing pressures it faces by secularization.

"I will assume several things about your institutions," Benne said. "You continue to strive for quality. Your calling is to give a good education. You will strive to communicate your Christian ethos as it is refracted through your particular traditions of worship, service, vocation, justice and sexual morality."

"You want to form thinking Christians who can deal with the modern world without losing their soul, but without rejecting the truth in secular claims," Benne said, "and that what you bring to the educational table is the full-blown Trinitarian faith, with its claims to comprehensiveness, centrality and unsurpassability." He challenged those in attendance to continue hiring faculty who are interested in engaging Christianity and Christian education in the classroom. Students, he said, are willing to take into the modern world what they have learned from these Christian educators.

An ideal marriage

Science and faith ought to be perfect partners, as both seek the truth about life. Both are investigating a revelation of God. Yet whenever the two come close together, a creative tension results — at times bordering on hostile. So, why are the two, so obviously destined for each other and the same goal, hampered by a frustrated engagement? Who stands between them and the altar?

I was asked to present a paper at a recent philosophy conference at Brock. The title of the conference was "Spirituality, Modern Science, and its Discontents," and to add another variable to the conversation, all 30 presenters were asked to read the book *Hope and Challenge* by President Khatami of Iran. He argues that Western civilization is in decay and decline, and Islam will rise to be the next great influence in the world.

How would I contribute to this odd mix of ideas? I dug deep in my campus ministry briefcase of sociological and theological research and came up with something I thought would be simple yet creative. I entitled it "Providence, Progress, and Big Mac Nihilism."

Providence, Progress, Big Mac Nihilism

Using the work of one of my sociology professors, David Lyon, I suggested that science, detached from God, has led to an unfettered consumerism. I explained it in this way: if pre-modern society saw history as directed by God (Providence), the Enlightenment transposed this creed into a new key, where history proceeds forward solely by the ingenuity of humanity and its tools (Progress). But recently, faith in a better future by technology is uncertain, as machines have proven to be a mixed blessing at best. History may even be regressing, as the poor get poorer and the creation chokes from fumes. We don't know where we are going any more, but we continue to move fast (Nihilism).

Nihilism is not just depressing philosophy or dark plays at the alternative theatre. It is buying into a consumer lifestyle of glittering appliances and neat-o electronic gadgets without ever asking the vital "What for?" In this sense, nihilism can be a very practical part of the life of even steady church-goers, for lifestyle speaks louder than church membership.

I used a book by George Ritzer entitled *The McDonaldization of Society* to develop my point further. Ritzer contends that it is the goal of modern science to rationalize all of life and every corner of the globe, and the unintended consequence of that is "McDonaldization": the process whereby the values of efficiency, calculability, predictability, and the use of non-human technology override every other human value. This cultural shift, he contends, has affected every area of life from the maternity ward to the funeral home. McDonaldization is a global phenomenon, and although Islam is spreading fast, the enticing promises of Ronald McDonald will spread faster.

(W)holy matrimony

It is not that science is bad. But when it is divorced from the propriety it is given in a proper relationship with faith, it is dangerously alone. We need to retrieve the notion of Providence in order

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman



to give our lives — our hopes and fears — proper perspective. Science-without-limits destroys life by neglecting non-measurable values like community, creativity, and Spirit.

Providence sets a pace different from machines — what we may call the slow movement of grace in our lives. The speed at which things grow, heal, and forgive. Creation is slow, and slow is beautiful. Beauty cannot be McDonaldized.

"When it comes right down to it," prophesied Bill Gates, "religion is not very efficient." But there is more to the world than the world of efficiency. Human beings are much too clever to live without this faithful wisdom, which is the God-given partner to science. Only with this holy marriage will we be able to see with God's eyes. Or better yet, see with God's heart.

Jesus goes to the G-8 summit

A bearded, beaded student asked a brilliant question after I presented my paper: "I'm going to protest at the G-8 summit. If you were allowed access to the table of global leaders, what question would you ask them?"

I was at a loss, so I deflected it back to the audience. While they deliberated, I was inspired to say that I knew a good question that Jesus Christ asked 2000 years ago: What does it profit you if you gain the whole world but forfeit your soul?

This is what is at stake: our souls, and the soul of the planet. To forget God in his sovereignty and love is to forget the deepest, richest, life-giving part of reality. Faith, like science, is a knowledge that helps us cope and even flourish in our local communities. If the two are not in a healthy relationship, we are lost to superstition or the logic of efficiency, which has led to the vacuum of rampant consumerism.

Desire for autonomy persists.

Yet the desire for autonomy persists. Later in the conference, a physics professor suggested to a Unitarian philosopher that scientists proclaim they are about to uncover the physical laws of the universe that will allow them to predict any and every event, molecular, human, or cosmic. "Spiritual" phenomena included.

The philosopher replied by saying if the universe were a pool table, what he contends may be true. But the universe is not a pool table. Can science ever predict what his future great-grand-daughter's poem will look like? Does his faith in scientific progress go that deep?

"Freedom, novelty, and creativity are not only part of human behavior," he continued, "but freedom, novelty and creativity are part of the very metaphysical furniture of the universe." History ambles forward, not towards a utopia of efficiency and predictability, but towards God's greatest dream for it. Within that, everything has its place. Within that, we can all make our home.



Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.

Poetry/Media

Celebrating strawberries



CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

Harry der Nederlanden

This is the second year our church has had a "strawberry social" after church in the Spring. I like to think of it as a celebration of the first fruits of the earth. Some will object that the honors should go to asparagus or spinach. But can you imagine an asparagus and spinach social? Who would come?

My wife, Rose, who's on the hospitality committee, tells me the social is not to celebrate strawberries but to thank all the volunteers for their faithful work. What better way than with the first crimson sweetness that springs from our fertile earth!

Rather than buy a couple of dozen quarts, Rose and I rose early Saturday morning (well, kind of early) and went picking. It didn't take me long to discover that my strength is still limited. So I took a little break. (Well, maybe it wasn't so little.) And while Rose knelt with her nose to the earth, I gazed skyward and hummed a little song — like Winnie-the-Pooh. Here it is.

Strawberry Song

*Rich and juicy strawberries
Dangling row on row
Call us out into the fields
To pick them where they grow.
They hug so closely to the earth
And snuggle in the straw
To spell our humble birth
And fill our hearts with mirth.*

Refrain:
*Thank you for the strawberries
A-creeping 'long the ground,
Urging me to bend my knees,
Which make a snarling sound,
Which make a snarling sound.*

Tune: Make-it-up-as-you-go
(Be sure to include a few vocal arpeggios and arabesques on the word "strawberries" or "earth".)

*Your hands are stained with strawberries,
Your knees are black with dirt,
You cut them up and sweeten them,
And then you change your shirt.*

Christian Courier writers win awards

GUELPH, Ont. — Two of Christian Courier's writers — Sonya Vander Veen Feddema and John Krueger — were honored with awards at the latest God Uses Ink Conference, held in mid-June in Guelph, Ont.

Vander Veen Feddema received honorable mention in the short fiction category for her story "The Third Christmas," which appeared in *Christian Courier*'s most recent Christmas issue, Dec. 10, 2001. Krueger won honorable mention in the personal essay category for his story "The Holocaust in a Shoe," which appeared in *Christian Courier* (Feb. 19, 2001) as well as *PRISM*.

The Canadian awards for published work by writers who are Christian were presented by The Word Guild during the 18th annual God Uses Ink conference, reports the Guild's N. J. Lindquist in a press release. This is the first year the Guild has presented that conference, which was previously organized by Faith Today magazine. Here is a partial listing of winners:

Personal Essay:

Winner: Kathleen Gibson, "Someone I Love Has Died," *Reader's Digest*.

Honorable mention: John Krueger, "The Holocaust in a Shoe," *PRISM* (also in *Christian Courier*).

Honorable mention: Paul M. Beckingham, "Christmas Sabbath Jazz," *Christianweek*.

Short fiction:

Winner: Linda Hall, "White Christmas Pansies," *Christianweek*.

Honorable mention: Shirley Byers Lalonde, "When the CEO Left the Building," *WITH*.

Honorable mention: Sonya Vander Veen Feddema, "The Third Christmas," *Christian Courier*.

Non-fiction book (history/biography):

Winner: Kate Langan, *The Art of Worship*, Nimbus Publishing Ltd.

Honorable mention: Irving Hexham, (editor) Mark Konnert, Peter Barrs, Carine Barrs, *The Christian Travelers Guide to France*, Zondervan.

Non-fiction book (Christian living):

Winner: Mark Buchanan, *Your God Is Too Safe*, Multnomah Publishers.

Honorable mention: Brian C. Stiller, *What Happens When I Die?* HarperCollins Publishers.

Non-fiction book (church leadership/theology/philosophy):

Winner: Denyse O'Leary, *Faith @ Science*, J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing.

Honorable mention: Stanley J. Grenz. *The Social God and the Relational Self*, Westminster John Knox Press.

Novel:

Winner: Connie Brummel Crook, *The Hungry Year*, Stoddart Kids Publishing.

94-year-old author wins career achievement award

The Leslie K. Tarr award for career achievement was presented to 94-year-old Grace Irwin, author of seven books. The Tarr award is given annually to a Canadian who has shown excellence in writing, helping other writers, and positioning the church in Canada. Irwin's books include *Least of All Saints*, *Andrew Connington, Contend with Horses*, *In Little Place*, *The Seventh Earl*, *Servant of Slaves* (the story of John Newton, which is currently being made into a movie) and *Three Lives in Mine*, a memoir.

Dr. Irwin taught Latin, Greek and ancient history for 39 years, all but one at Humberside Collegiate in Toronto, and is an ordained minister. Upon receiving the award, she shared stories of her life and her writing, and demonstrated that age has not altered her enthusiasm or her active mind. She also donated copies of *Andrew Connington* and *Three Lives in Mine* to be sold for the benefit of The Word Guild.

Co-sponsors of the awards were Augsburg Press/Castle Quay Books, Exchange Newsletter, *ChristianWeek*, That's Life! Communications, and The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada/Faith Today.

Judges included John Alexander, Rob Alloway, Tom Carson, Joe Couto, Debra Fieguth, John Franklin, Sabitri Ghosh, Nandy Heule, Denyse O'Leary, Lloyd Rang, Flynn Ritchie, Karen Stiller, Lois Sweet, Marian Van Til (formerly with *Christian Courier*), Lorraine Williams, Ray Wiseman, and Michelle Wiseman.

Winners received their awards following a Friday night banquet during the three-day conference. More than 200 people gathered to hear plenary speaker Michel Coren, attend classes and workshops about the art, craft, and business of writing, and talk with editors from a variety of American and Canadian publishing houses and magazines.

Church

Rumors of new leader upset conservative Anglicans

Mike Wendling

(Religion Today) — Evangelical activists in the Church of England have written to British Prime Minister Tony Blair warning of a schism if a liberal bishop is appointed as the next leader of the church. Recently it was reported that Archbishop of Wales Rowan Williams is favored by church officials to take over from the current leader of the church, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey.

Carey is retiring in October, after overseeing celebrations surrounding the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

Both the queen and Blair have a say in the final selection of the new church leader, although they are expected to follow the advice of the bishops.

Appointment could cause major split

British media reported in June that Williams was first amongst two names recommended by a special panel of bishops and vicars. The prime minister will now select



Rowan Williams

one of the names and the queen will be asked to approve the candidate.

A group of evangelical leaders in Britain, the United States and other countries has warned against selecting Williams because of his support for the ordination of homosexuals.

The clergymen say that the

appointment of Williams would "fly in the face of holy Scripture" and could lead to a split in the Anglican Church.

"Rowan Williams would not have the confidence of the vast majority of Anglicans in the world, who are now in the Third World and who, as loyal Anglicans, take the holy Scriptures as their supreme authority," their letter read. "His appointment would lead to a major split in the Anglican Communion."

One of the signatories to the letter, Richard Bewes, the Rector of All Souls Church in London, said that disputes over homosexual ordination have adversely affected the church in the United States and Canada.

"What we have done is little more than give a warning," he said Friday. "Too often, we follow developments on the other side of the Atlantic. In this case, to be behind is to be ahead." Bewes said that previous church decisions had firmly set policy in this area.

"Now it seems that for the first

time in history, we are about to appoint an Archbishop of Canterbury who sits loosely on one of the great foundation principals of society," he said.

In a recent interview with the Australian Anglican publication *Southern Cross*, Williams admitted ordaining a man that he knew to have had a homosexual encounter in the past. He expressed uncertainty about same-sex marriages, however, saying that "complicated questions would arise" if they were sanctioned by the church.

Integral sexual morality

"I believe there is an integral sexual morality, which the church has rightly taught," he told the paper. "It's only within that framework that I want to discuss the question of active homosexuality

as a theological possibility."

Although Williams supports the ordination of homosexuals and women, he is conservative on the subject of abortion and has spoken out against the emergency contraceptive or "morning-after" pill.

The London-based Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement said they supported Williams' bid for the Anglican leadership and that the panel choosing the candidates showed a broad range of opinion. Director Richard Kirker said that Williams is held in high regard by many evangelicals other than those who signed the letter to the prime minister.

"Any candidate who is willing to work for a more inclusive church is welcome," Kirker said. "We hope the prime minister will not be deflected by this letter."

Australians less committed to Christianity, traditional family life

Margaret Simons

SYDNEY, Australia (ENI) — Census figures showing a decline in Australians' commitment to Christianity confirm that churches must reassess their structures and operations to meet the challenge of modern times, according to the general secretary of Australia's National Council of Churches, the Rev. John Henderson.

The figures, released in June but drawn from a national census conducted in 2001, show a decline in marriage, falling fertility and a rise in the number of people declaring they have no religion. Christianity remains the dominant faith in Australia, but continues to lose followers as other religions gain in popularity.

Henderson said the census figures confirmed trends that had already been recognized by the churches. "We have to face these currents in society, just as we have to face the increase in materialism and privatization," he said.

Christianity not a number game

"Christianity is not in any case a numbers game. It is about God's love. Jesus had only 12 against the Roman Empire, but it was his message and his self-sacrifice that counted."

Henderson said the churches had to redefine themselves in the face of post-modern times. "We can't just continue in past modes. We have to reassess whether our existing structures are aiding and abetting the task of communicating the central Christian message," he said.

He attributed the drop in Christian numbers in part to a "new frankness" in society. Nominal Christians were now less likely to declare a religious affiliation. "There is not much advantage in being a Christian these days in professional or social life. It can even be quite embarrassing for people to be identified with a religion. It is awkward to reveal yourself as a churchgoer," he said.

But this was not a reason for churches to despair. "Perhaps we are only just beginning to acknowledge who we actually are, and that might present the churches with an opportunity to present the message in a new way," he said.

The census also documents a big decline in traditional family life. In 1971, only 36 per cent of 20 to 29-year-olds had never married. Thirty years later, this has grown to 76 per cent. Only 51 per cent of the adult population is married — down from 56 per cent in 1991 and 64 per cent in the 1954 census.

One-parent families have grown more than 2 1/2 times, to 15 per cent of all families, over the past 30 years.

Those declaring no religion in the census jumped to 15 per cent of the population, more than double the figure three decades ago.

The number of people declaring themselves Christians dropped to 68 per cent of the population in 2001, a decline of more than two per cent since the last census in 1996.

Although Christianity remained the nation's main faith, with more than 12.8 million followers, Buddhism and Islam have attracted people at a greater rate.

In total, 4.9 per cent of the population, or 911,226 people, identified themselves as following a non-Christian religion — up from 3.5 per cent in 1996. Buddhism has overtaken Islam as the dominant religious faith after Christianity.

Twenty-five per cent of people either said they were of "no religion" or declined to answer the question.

The National Council of Churches, an associate council of the World Council of Churches, is an ecumenical body representing 15 denominations, including Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Salvation Army, and Lutherans.

God and a glass of ale for the postmodern generation



A neighborhood pub in London, England. Using a bar for religious meetings is becoming more popular.

(ENS) — Two Episcopal priests are exploring a way to "make religion more significant" to the post-modern generation. Instead of attempting to lure post-moderns into church with promises of salvation or threats of brimstone and hellfire, Lisa Senuta and Helen Sloboda-Barber are using a different kind of age-old enticement: beer.

"My conviction is that people of my age group are a little timid about walking through church doors," said Senuta, a priest at St. Thomas the Apostle in Overland Park, Kansas. The two friends, both graduates of the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest in Texas and members of Generation X themselves, began

discussing the problem of reaching out to the post-modern generation and possible ways to overcome it.

Sloboda-Barber said, "We decided to host a weekly meeting [in a bar] and focus on conversations that have to do with God in our everyday lives."

Using a bar as a religious meeting place is not a new idea. According to Senuta, she first hit upon the idea after reading *The Post-Evangelical* by Dave Tomlinson, former leader of the House Church movement in Britain, who called for reformation of evangelical denominations to appeal to post-modern generations. "C.S. Lewis even held philosophical and theological discussions in pubs," Senuta added.

Church

Anglicans struggle with same-sex issue

... continued from page 3

Anglican Communion in New Westminster" have appealed to the archbishop of Canterbury for the appointment of a "flying bishop." Flying bishops are bishops with full authority in the Church of England who provide oversight for clergy and parishes who do not want to be part of a diocese that accepts women priests.

Following the vote and its fallout, New Westminster Bishop

Michael Ingham said, "No one is being excluded from our fellowship today. We have not taken sides with one group in our church against another. We have chosen to live together in mutual respect."

However, Bishop Ingham, who has long supported the blessing of same-sex unions, told the *National Post* he is not worried about the collapse of the diocese.

"Clearly there's a lot of emotion. We have got to wait for that to

settle down," he said. "Hopefully cooler heads will prevail and people will take a longer view and actually consider what the synod has done because I believe the synod has been even-handed."

Conscience clause

The synod has voted to accept a proposal, submitted specially by Ingham, that includes a "conscience clause" that would allow dissenting priests and lay people to

avoid taking part in the rites, which have yet to be developed. He also called for the appointment of what he described as an "episcopal visitor" — a Canadian bishop from outside the diocese who would minister to Anglicans who oppose the unions. This is similar to the "flying bishop" proposal mentioned above.

The diocese follows the United Church, which has endorsed similar measures. Mr. Ingham also noted that Anglican military chaplains have been blessing same-sex unions since 1992.

(Ingham) had said before, that next time he would not withhold consent," said Archbishop Michael Peers.

Bishop acted responsibly

While the Primate said he believed the bishop and the diocese had acted responsibly in reaching a decision on same-sex blessings, he fully expected the matter would be on the agenda of the next meeting of the Canadian House of Bishops and quite possibly at the meeting of General Synod in 2004.

In both 1998 and 2001, Bishop Ingham withheld his consent to similar motions that passed, saying that the margin was too slim. This year's motion also asked the bishop to provide a conscience clause to protect clergy and parishes which could not support such blessings and to develop a process for parishes wishing to perform same-sex unions.

Out for a walk

Romans 7:14-8:17

In these hot summer months, I usually wait until the cooler evening hours to take my dog for her long walk of the day. As the sun sets and a slight breeze stirs, the two of us make our trek through the neighborhood.

The dusky hours are delightful for walking, and also prime time for the appearance of rabbits. I will be strolling along, lost in thought, when suddenly my dog will freeze, eyes on some small gray mound in the distance. I stop, too, and try to focus my eyes on what she is seeing. How she can spot the difference between a rabbit and a pile of grass clippings at 25 yards is beyond me, but she does it.

If we are in an open area away from cars and other walkers, I slowly bend and release her from her leash. One may expect that she would immediately charge the rodent, but she rarely does. Instead, the huntress within her emerges and she stalks her prey slowly, carefully. Lifting each paw and setting it down without a sound she makes her way toward the as-yet-unsuspecting rabbit. Her ears are cocked, her eyes are focused, she will not be deterred. And then, within a moment, she is off, racing toward the bunny that is now leaping for safety.

Meli: Huntress of the Night

She's never caught one. And I wouldn't release her if I thought she had a chance. Removing a warm rabbit from the dripping mouth of a golden retriever does not strike me as a delightful evening's entertainment. The entertainment for me comes in watching the hunt. I am amazed at how her base instincts take over. The dog who sleeps on my bed, who jumps at the rattle of a cheese slicer, who has never eaten anything she caught (and conversely, has never caught anything she could eat), suddenly becomes "Meli: Huntress of the Night" at the sight of a rabbit lurking in the bush.

I can train her to stop at intersections, to hold out her paw for a shake, to wait until I am finished eating before she makes a move toward the table, but I cannot train away her instincts. They are hardwired into her DNA. Given the right circumstances, the dog who sleeps on my bed would rip a rabbit in half.

A jarring realization.

It's a jarring realization. But even more sobering is to realize that I am the same way. Granted, stalking rabbits is not part of my make-up, but stalking sin certainly is. My base instincts toward

Chapter & Verse

Rev. Mary S. Hulst



ripping up another are surprisingly close to the surface, as are my instincts to exaggerate my successes, ignore my failures, indulge my appetites, and rationalize my sin. I am hardwired to ignore the ten commandments. Given the right circumstances, I'd break 10 out of 10.

Hardwired sinners

Total depravity, we Calvinists call this. Madding, is how Paul described it. "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." (Romans 7:19) Sin is woven into the fibre of our beings and we cannot disentangle it. Anyone who has battled addiction — chemical, sexual, or simply the human addiction to sin — anyone who has battled the power of sin understands the agony of Romans 7. Our instincts are not toward God, even when we want them to be. We are hardwired sinners, from our DNA out.

There is only one place to go: "Wretched man that I am!" laments Paul. "Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.... There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." (Romans 7:24, 25; 8:1,2)

My dog will always be on a rabbit hunt. Her instincts will always pull her away from walking with me and toward the furry objects hiding out in the bushes. Our instincts, too, will always pull us toward the temptations lurking around the next bend. But, thanks be to God, we need not live worn down by guilt and shame when we sin. When we "do not do the good we want, but the evil we do not want, that we do," we can seek forgiveness and absolution, we can seek health and new life, we can seek after God. We can receive grace.

This is the ongoing process of sanctification. Our instincts toward sin will not, unfortunately, fade over time. But with God's aid and by his grace, over time may we learn to leave the temptations in the bushes and seek more and more to enjoy the walk with God.



Rev. Mary S. Hulst is pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Not surprised

The primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, meanwhile, said he was not surprised by synod's vote to move ahead with the blessings, reports the Anglican Church website.

"The clergy and laity have made this choice before. Michael

Bush approval ratings: 82 per cent among Protestant clergy

(Religion Today) — More than eight out of 10 Protestant church pastors generally approve of the job President Bush is doing, while just 11 per cent generally disapprove, and six per cent have no opinion.

During the same time frame in which the ministers' opinions were gathered, data released from the Gallup Poll showed that an average of just more than 77 per cent of American adults approve of President Bush's performance, while 17 per cent disapprove and five per cent have no opinion.

Ellison Research, an independent marketing research firm based in Phoenix, Arizona, conducted the study among a representative sample of 567 senior pastors from Protestant churches across the U.S. The study was designed and funded by Ellison Research.

Although approval is high

nationwide among pastors, it is somewhat lower than average in the Northeast, where the president's job approval rating is 78 per cent (compared to 82 per cent in the Midwest, and 84 per cent in both the South and the West). Much of this small disparity is because the Northeast is home to a somewhat larger proportion of politically liberal ministers.

Ron Sellers, president of Ellison Research, explained that the primary reason pastors as a group are more likely to approve of President Bush's performance is that pastors are considerably more likely than the general public to be Republican. "While among the U.S. Population Democrats outnumber Republicans, among Protestant ministers, Republicans outnumber Democrats by a wide margin," Sellers noted.

Vietnamese pastors arrested

VIETNAM — Voice of the Martyrs in the United Kingdom says 14 Vietnamese pastors have been arrested in the Central Highlands in the last few weeks. The exact location of these pastors is not certain, raising some concern for their safety. This brings to 26 the known number of Christian pastors laboring in Vietnam's rural prison

system, including 12 who remain in the notorious brick kilns in the North.

Pray for those who are imprisoned, that they would be comforted in their isolation and will be sustained by their faith in Christ.

Analysis

Working faith: how religious organizations provide welfare-to-work services

Harry der Nederlanden

The 30-page report with the above title indicates that certain basic assumptions underlying the debate over the President Bush's Faith-Based Initiative are incorrect. The report's authors are Stephen V. Monsma (Professor of Political Science, Pepperdine University and a former professor at Calvin College) and Carolyn M. Mounts (Associate Researcher, Pepperdine University).

This study examines how faith-based welfare-to-work programs differ from their government-run, for-profit, and secular non-profit counterparts in four American cities: Philadelphia, Chicago, Dallas and Los Angeles. The nationwide scope makes it the most extensive such survey to date, said Monsma. It considers 500 welfare-to-work programs, and assesses how the faith-based programs differ from the other types of programs in three areas:

- (a) funding from, and contacts with, government;
- (b) services offered; and
- (c) overall size and staffing.

Key findings

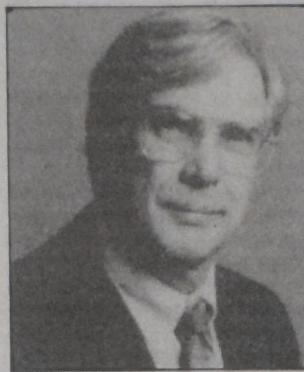
Among the key findings are:

- Government funding in the U.S. of faith-based welfare-to-work programs is extensive. Fifty percent of all faith-based welfare-to-work programs already receive government funding.

• Among those faith-based programs that receive government funds, the amount of funding received is limited, but significant. Government funds comprise 50 per cent of the budgets of less-religious faith-based programs, and 30 per cent of the budgets of those that integrate religious elements into the services they provide.

Evidence of discrimination

• There is some evidence of discrimination against faith-based groups in the disbursement of government funds. Secular nonprofits receive much more government funding than do faith-based groups, and 21 per cent of all faith-based programs that have applied for government funding were turned down, compared with only seven per cent of similar applica-



PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Professor Stephen V. Monsma

tions from secular nonprofits.

- There is little evidence that faith-based groups have to reduce their religious emphasis or practices as a result of receiving government funding. Only three of the 60 faith-based programs receiving government funding reported having to reduce these practices as a result of receipt of these funds.

- Nearly 40 per cent of faith-based groups have an internal policy of not applying for government funding. Most do so out of general fears of governmental interference with their operations.

- Most faith-based programs have many informal contacts with government agencies and are largely satisfied with those contacts.

• About 40 per cent of the faith-based programs explicitly integrate religious practices into the services they provide. A majority of religious groups that run faith-based programs do not make explicit religious messages a central feature of their work.

- More than 40 per cent of the religiously-integrated programs receive government funding.

• Government-run programs, for-profit firms, and secular nonprofits are much larger in size than their faith-based counterparts.

The report was released at a news conference June 10 in Washington, D.C. Government funding for faith-based groups, known as charitable choice, already applies to welfare, drug treatment and some community-service programs. Bush's plan to expand it to 10 more types of programs has stalled in Congress despite administration assurances that the funds would not cover religious aspects of a faith group's programs.

Innovative networks

At the news conference, according to the *Philadelphia Enquirer*, Elaine Kamarck of Harvard University, who shaped welfare reform in the Clinton administration, said the study showed that faith-based ministries are "innovative networks." While some of them may pressure clients religiously,

especially in rural areas, she said, the "fire-storm of criticism" of charitable choice was unfair.

In a recent editorial Stephen Lazarus, Senior Policy Associate of the Center for Public Justice, based in Washington, D.C., wrote:

"To most observers, the Faith-Based Initiative appears to be idling in neutral at best. Expansion of Charitable Choice — 'the stake in the sand' that defines in law important protections for faith-based groups who choose to collaborate with government social programs — passed the House, but was dropped from the Senate bill, causing some of the President's 'armies' to question whether to enlist to work in a partnership with government at all. Tax incentives in the CARE Act to encourage charitable giving may be slashed drastically by the Senate Finance Committee for budget reasons."

"How then to re-ignite the Initiative?" asks Lazarus.

He calls on the government to confront their critics and articulate more clearly the principles that propel the FBO Initiative. "Side-stepping difficult issues," he warns, "allows opponents to define the debate."

Faith communities no less part of the public

"The U.S. Constitution," he goes on, "gives faith-based organizations the same right to use public funds to provide public services that 'secular' groups have. All should be free to hire staff that reflect their principled convictions, religious or secular. No group should have to change its mission or hide its distinctive character to get funding. No bias for or against anyone, only a level playing field for all."

Opponents of Charitable Choice in the U.S. Senate, he says, have offered a series of amendments to strip away the ability of faith-based groups to hire staff who agree with the religious basis of their programs because, they allege, this permits religious discrimination. He encourages FBOs to aggressively defend this freedom.

"Faith communities are no less a part of 'the public' than secular groups," he argues, "and they are right to insist on equal



UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Professor John J. Dilulio, Jr.

treatment by government. People deserve the right to offer and receive faith-based services as part of the public safety net."

Time for courts to intervene

John J. Dilulio, Jr., a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and former director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, in an article in the *Wall Street Journal* urged FBOs that find they are being discriminated against to take their cases to court.

"Government's failure to fund inner-city, faith-based charities on the same basis as it funds other nonprofits," he writes, "clearly violates the equal protection clause [of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution]. It's time for courts to intervene, and end this discrimination against the faithful."

"Government gives hundreds of billions of dollars a year in grants and contracts to national nonprofit organizations, including worthy religious mega-charities like Catholic Charities, Jewish Federations, Lutheran Social Services and the Salvation Army," Dilulio points out. "But godly inner-city people who administer aid to low-income minorities receive either no government money at all, or merely the crumbs off other grantees' tables."

Monsma's report can be found at: <http://www.manhattan-institute.org>. Summary provided by the Center for Public Justice based in Washington, DC. Other information garnered from the CPJ website at: cpjustice.org.



ANN MARIE ROUSSEAU

A woman eats at a soup kitchen. A majority of religious groups that run faith-based programs do not make explicit religious messages a central feature of their work.

Age is just a state of mind



CATHERINE MILINAIRE

Lisa M. Petsche

"*Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years.*" — Watterson Lowe

We've just concluded a run of birthdays in my family; mine was among them. I turned 41.

These days, I often have to stop and think when someone asks my age, especially since it no longer happens very often. They might think I'm pausing to decide how truthful to be, but that's not the case. Rather, age just isn't that relevant to me anymore, and hasn't been for some time.

But I remember with amusement when it used to be. There was a time when I would report my age to the half- or sometimes even quarter-year, in an effort to emphasize my maturity. My oldest daughter (11 1/4) has begun doing likewise.

Life begins at 40?

I recall, too, as a young teenager seeing my father reading a book, "Life Begins at 40." I found the title amusing, because at the time 40 seemed over the hill. Now I understand how accurate the book's message was, for I'm just starting to gain momentum on the road to fulfilling my potential. I regard it as an ongoing journey, for if I ever stopped growing, what interest would life hold?

Working in a geriatric setting has underscored for me that age is relative, and truly a state of mind. I've heard patients up to age 90

remark disdainfully, "I don't belong here with all these old people."

A cause for celebration

Yet many adults I know, especially those over 35, dread the arrival of another birthday. Some even prefer not to acknowledge such occasions. In my family, though, birthdays at any age are a cause for celebration.

In contrast, in my husband's family adult birthdays are low-key events. (He'd prefer not to celebrate his at all, but our kids won't let him get away with that so we've come up with a compromise.) Moreover, no one gives away their age.

Whenever my kids have, with typical childhood curiosity and directness, asked their seventy-ish Grandma her age, she's given a witty answer: "I'm as old as my tongue and a little older than my teeth."

But that didn't satisfy six-year-old Sean on her last birthday; he kept pressing for a number. "How old do you think I am?" my mother-in-law finally countered, after unsuccessfully dodging the question. "A hundred," Sean replied after a moment's deliberation. We adults chuckled, for she would have been much better off divulging the correct number.

On my side of the family we don't attempt to conceal our maturity. For example, when the grandkids ask one of my parents

Praying for rain

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE



"Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood" (Gen. 8:21).

My wife was on the way home from town last week when threatening rain clouds let go with a deluge — something highly unusual here since it is the driest it's been in 70 to 120 years, depending on who says. Wilma's spirits fell, though, when upon nearing our farm she saw that the shower had missed it. We sat on the deck and watched more heavy clouds roll by, leaving us with only a few drops of rain.

A few days before, I had awakened during the night feeling heavily burdened. The first thought that came to mind was that there was trouble in the family somewhere and I went through a catalogue of prayer. But I think it was the drought preying on my mind.

A worry list

We could worry about the following:

1. In two to three weeks there will be no pasture. We will have to decide what livestock to keep and buy feed for the remainder.

2. There is no hay to put up. Ordinarily we grow all the hay we need. But we had to buy hay a year ago already when the drought first became serious. Because of scarcity and large U.S. subsidies, hay prices have more than doubled.

3. We normally buy grain in the form of oat screenings. With parched crops over a large area, the oat supply is bound to be small and escalating prices may be followed by no supply at all.

4. Several years of dry weather and mild winters have resulted in a gopher population explosion. Of no assistance is new legislation cutting poison potency, ostensibly to keep farmers from using it to commit suicide. Hoards of gophers are consuming a large amount of what little grass is growing and throwing up mounds on the remainder. Badgers are leaving large holes and mounds in pursuit of gophers.

5. Fairy rings also proliferate in dry years, it seems. This fungus also obliterates grass in a myriad of crescents. A trio of treatments is needed: fertilizer, oxygen and water. Water is the

their age, they always receive an accurate answer. Mom and Dad don't want to give the impression that age is something to be embarrassed or otherwise concerned about.

Aging not honored enough

Unfortunately, though, aging — and the wisdom that comes with it — generally isn't honored in our culture the way it ought to be.

And so it came as a pleasant surprise last year that my 40th birthday turned out to be anticlimactic — hardly a milestone and certainly no cause for despair. I responded to the inevitable age jokes by stating truthfully that I'd much rather be 40 than, say, 14 or even 24 again. I wouldn't trade any of the insights

limiting factor.

Add the above to the usual challenges of farming and the sum total with consequences could occupy our thinking to unhealthy proportion.

A neighbor recently met my wife in the store. "You still going to church? How about putting a word in to the man upstairs about the need for rain?"

What to pray? We often hear the assertion that we deserve good weather. You and I know our heart condition well enough to not to petition God on the basis of what we deserve.

We do know, however, that we may boldly go to God for our needs — daily bread, for instance. He is a Father-God who gifts his children according to his "riches in glory".

The creation is suffering

Perhaps the significant consideration is what are our needs?

In my prayers I lean toward pointing out to the Lord that his creation is suffering. There is need for relief for the plants, animals and soil so that food may be grown.

We know the covenant with creation is to never again destroy it with a flood. There are still disastrous floods, but never worldwide. We have drought, but never worldwide. Food is always produced somewhere.

We have the capability to help each other survive regional crises. Unfortunately the way of the West is for individuals to stand alone and be left on their own. Also unfortunately, we have been poor stewards demanding too much from the earth. The consequences make something like a drought much more grievous.

Yet while asking forgiveness for our presumption in taking more than we need and not being community-minded, I continue to request rain — and also, to not lose the farm.



Vern Gleddie has a ranch near Edmonton, Alta.

or confidence I've gained in the years since then.

Finite number of birthdays

On my latest birthday, I couldn't help thinking about my friend Cameron who died suddenly last year, shortly after his own birthday, and how neither he nor any of us who knew him had reason to think it might be his last. I didn't dwell on this in a morbid way, but it reminded me that we all have a finite number of birthdays.

That's reason enough to acknowledge and enjoy each one, for a birthday is really just a formal opportunity to celebrate life.

I can do without the presents, though, for what I enjoy most at this stage is my kids' contagious enthusiasm as they head out with

my husband to shop for a cake (it always ends up being the Oreo cookie variety but I'm supposed to act surprised), heartily sing happy birthday, help me blow out the candles with gusto, and eagerly present me with homemade cards full of sweet, keepsake sentiments.

I'll take that kind of birthday any time.

Lisa M. Petsche is a mother of three, social worker and freelance writer.

Christian Courier is online!
Christian Courier has just completed and launched its new website:
www.christiancourier.ca
Check it out!

Fiction

Taryn's deliverance

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

"Strange," Mom said, looking out the farmhouse kitchen window. "Red flag's up. Hmmm, the letter carrier usually isn't this early on Saturday morning. Get the mail for me, would you, Taryn?"

"Can't I get it later?" Taryn asked, twisting her bracelet around her wrist. "What's the rush, anyway?"

"I'm expecting an insurance refund today," Mom said emphatically. "And I need to get to the bank this morning." She plunked dirty plates into the sink full of soapy water.

"Taryn! What's upset you? Calm down!" he pleaded.

"Check if there are any wild flowers left in the ditch," Granny said, pointing at a vase of wilted daisies on the windowsill. "No rush, though. Just take your sweet time."

Taryn shoved back her chair from the kitchen table and stood up. She went outside and walked down the long gravel driveway, shivering in the damp September air. Reaching the mailbox, she pushed down its red metal flag and flipped the lid open. She looked inside.

"Ahhhhh!" she wailed.

Flat snout. Marble eyes. Stiff bristles. Rigid flesh. Screaming, Taryn bolted to the house. She tripped and fell to the scraping stones, then stumbled up.

Dad dashed from the barn before Taryn reached the house. "Taryn! What's upset you? Calm down!" he pleaded. The worry lines on his forehead deepened, as if a plow furrowed there incessantly.

Taryn fell against his burly frame. He held her in his stout arms and led her to the house, into the kitchen.

"What happened?" Mom exclaimed, clattering cutlery on the counter.

"Pig... ahhhhh," Taryn sobbed.

"Speak sense," Dad urged. "You're jumbled."

"I mocked him a few days ago," Taryn choked out the words.

"Who?" Granny asked, handing her granddaughter a tissue.

"Mitchell. In Grade Ten Biology. He's been acting so weird." Taryn wiped her wet face. "I laughed at him when he couldn't

dissect the frog. I told him there was nothing to it. He got white and suddenly passed out. Slumped to the floor. He came to a few minutes later. When he got up, he sneered at me and said, 'You pig!'"

"Mitchell said that?" Mom asked indignantly. "But he's your friend."

"Was my friend," Taryn said. "It had to be him. He put the dead pig in our mailbox!"



ILLUSTRATIONS BY HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN

"Dead pig!" Mom exclaimed, her face ashen. "In our mailbox!"

"My dear Lord," Granny prayed out loud. "What evil thing will happen next?"

"We'll get to the bottom of this," Dad growled. "I'll head over to Mitchell's as soon as I get the pig out of the mailbox." He stomped out of the kitchen.

Through the window Taryn watched him stride to the barn and return with a dusty, burlap sack clenched in his fist. Ever since Trevor died, she thought, Dad is a seismograph waiting to register the next emotional earthquake.

Dad stalked to the black mailbox, reached inside it and grabbed the pig. He plopped it into the sack and flung it over his rigid shoulder.

As he returned up the driveway, the dead animal bounced in a morbid

rhythm to his step. He threw the sack into the back of the pickup truck, climbed into the driver's seat, and sped away.

"I'm going out back," Taryn said wearily. "Do you want me to go with you?" Granny asked.

"No," Taryn said. She kissed her grandmother's wrinkled forehead, then grabbed her jacket from the hook by the door. In the backyard Taryn passed Granny's old

clawfoot bathtub, converted into a flower garden and overflowing with geraniums and daisies. When Granny had moved in with them this past April after she'd lost everything but the bathtub in the North Carolina tornado, she had insisted on shipping it to her new home in Ontario, even though Dad had insisted she shouldn't. Everyone in Anston would think she was crazy, Dad had grumbled. But Granny had won out.

Past the north field, Taryn came to a narrow creek. She sat on a damp log, and took in the yellow-brown grass, the gray sky, the drooping goldenrod, and the stringy willow tree. Everything looks like it did yesterday, she thought. But everything is different now.

That night Taryn's dreams clanged with crazy cacophonous cries: "Pigs by mail! Dead pigs by mail!" In her sleep she yelled for Mom like she hadn't done in almost 10 years, not since she was five.

On Monday after school, Taryn came out to the abandoned soccer field. "I must have lost the bracelet out here during gym class," she thought. She knelt down, then crawled in the grass searching for the silver identification bracelet. Granny had given her after her six-year-old brother, Trevor, died three months ago in June. The bracelet inscribed with his name.

"Looking for something?" someone behind her said. Turning she saw Mitchell, towering over her.

"No."

Mitchell laughed nervously. "You always crawl in the grass?" He hesitated. Breathed deeply. No longer laughing or smiling. "I came to tell you. I didn't do it," he said solemnly.

Taryn stood up and faced him.

"The pig in your mailbox," he continued. "I'm squeamish, remember? You told your dad I did it. The news spread through the whole school."

Taryn spat out, "That's right.



You wouldn't have the guts, would you? Only the guts to dare a kid to jump." Her voice rose piercingly. "Jump, Trevor, jump! Jump, Trevor, jump!"

"Stop!" Mitchell's mouth twitched. He paused. "I'll help you find out who did this to you. It's sick!"

"What's a dead pig compared to a dead brother?" Taryn said through clenched teeth. She pushed Mitchell aside and ran to catch her bus.

At home, Taryn threw her knapsack on the kitchen floor.

"Hey, Taryn, you're late," Granny said as she set down her pen on the table.

"I missed the bus. Sarah's mom gave me a ride."

"How was your day?" Granny looked into her granddaughter's eyes. "Something wrong?"

Taryn touched her bare wrist. "Lost it?" Granny asked.



Taryn sat down beside her.

"In gym class, I think," she said. "I tried to find it after school. Mitchell wanted to help me."

"That was kind."

"Kind?" Taryn said vehem-

"Why do you hate him? Your dad said Mitchell denied putting the dead pig in the mailbox."

"I told you. He's been acting weird. He's changed." Taryn longed to tell Granny everything. To tell her Mitchell's secret. Even though she had promised she wouldn't.

Granny licked a stamp. "Writing prisoners today," she said in explanation. "Each needs deliverance." She wrote an address on an envelope, then looked pointedly at Taryn. "I'll never forget my deliverance," she said.

"What do you mean?"

"From the tornado."

Taryn smiled. Her grandmother never tired of sharing her story.

"When I heard the tornado coming, I ran to the bathroom and got in the tub," Granny began. "I'd heard that was a good thing to do. I did some rocking and some rolling, and rode the tub out into the woods. I landed in some briars. I thank God that I only suffered a few scratches and bruises. When I went back to the house to look, everything was gone except me and the old clawfoot. Do you understand why I shipped it here?"

"Because it's all you have left from your home?"

"Oh, I guess that's part of the reason. But mainly I took it so I'd remember my deliverance." Granny paused. "When you're freed from your storm, don't forget your deliverance. It'll give you courage when the next storm hits."

"I'm not in a storm," Taryn said emphatically, pushing back her chair and standing up.

"That tornado took me places I didn't want to go. Storms do that."

you know. But I rode with it and, by God's grace, I landed on my feet. With his help, you'll land on your feet, too."

"Don't worry about me," Taryn said.

"One more thing," Granny added. "I found this in the back of the mailbox today. It must have

at his newly-dyed orange hair. Attention-seeking-orangutan-orange, she thought spitefully.

Mr. Weller walked into the room. "Class, let's get started," he said. "I'm returning your tests. Look them over for a minute. If you have any questions, you can come to me after class."

easy to tell Eric. To tell everyone the secret. Then they would know what Mitchell was really like. "I know lots," she said emphatically, as she started to walk away.

"Hey, wait!" Eric ran after her. "Don't tell anyone what I did. They'll call me Runt or something worse. I have enough problems as it is. I don't count for much."

"You think you don't count? Only them? The tall ones? Handsome ones? Athletes?"

"It feels like that," he said sadly.

"You live in one warped world!" Taryn exclaimed.

"It's my own world," he said vehemently.

"And I have my own rules. If I don't like someone, I zap them."

"But your rules hurt me," Taryn protested.

"You don't like

me, so you zap me with a dead pig."

Eric looked at her, incomprehendingly.

"It hurt," she said simply.

"How can a dead pig hurt that much?" Eric asked scornfully. "It was only meant to make you think about how you treated Mitchell. I can't allow people to treat him that way."

Taryn turned to go.

"You won't tell?" Eric pleaded, following her. "My dad will kill me. And so will my uncle. I got the dead pig from behind his barn early Saturday. If he finds out I took it and left work in his truck to bring it to your place, I'll lose my job."

Taryn looked at Eric. Suddenly, she recognized herself in his confused eyes. Eric will do anything for Mitchell without considering the consequences, she thought. But I'm no different, keeping Mitchell's secret instead of telling the truth.

"I do so. And I'd do anything to be like him," Eric confessed.

"Don't bother!"

"What do you know that I don't know?" Eric asked.

Taryn hesitated. It would be so

"No," she said. "I won't. Because you've done me a big favor."

Eric's mouth fell open in surprise as Taryn ran to catch her school bus.

"Favor?" he yelled after her. "What favor?"

for you. And I understood how stupid I was to keep your secret. I couldn't save Trevor from drowning, but I should have told my parents right away why he drowned."

"What's going to happen now? To me, I mean?" Mitchell asked fearfully.

"My parents are going to talk to your parents tonight," Taryn answered. "Then they'll decide what to do."

Mitchell's face paled. His orangutan-orange hair hung like an absurd, clownish mop around his suddenly boyish features. Taryn looked down, pierced by his vulnerability. She fidgeted with the bracelet and tried to fasten it around her wrist.

"I'll help," Mitchell said tentatively.

Taryn hesitated, then held out her arm.

Mitchell took the bracelet from her and clasped the ends around her wrist. Taryn rotated the bracelet to look at the identification band. Trevor's name was obscured by dirt.

"Hold still," Mitchell said. With the edge of his baggy T-shirt, he wiped the dirt away.

The school bus dropped Taryn off at the end of the driveway. She walked to the back of the house and saw Granny by the old clawfoot bathtub.

"Hey, Taryn," Granny said. "How was school?"

"Fine." "Cat got your tongue?" Granny asked.

"It's a long story," Taryn said. "No one's asking you to tell it."

Taryn sat down on the edge of the bathtub, fingering its cool smoothness, and watched Granny nip off a dead geranium.



fallen behind the pig, so your dad didn't see it."

Granny handed Taryn a note addressed to her, folded repeatedly into a tight knot of paper. Taryn carefully unfolded it till the paper, a myriad of creases, lay before her. She blanched as she read its message.

Trembling, Taryn gave her the note. Granny read out loud, "See the runt. The runt destroyed — weak, wounded, withered."

"What does it say?" Granny asked.

Trembling, Taryn gave her the note. Granny read out loud, "See the runt. The runt destroyed — weak, wounded, withered. No room for runts in this stark world of status seekers — sturdy, stable, strong."

"Oh, Granny! Who would write this to me?"

"A prisoner," her grandmother said. "Sure enough, a prisoner who needs deliverance."

The next day in Biology class Taryn sat down at her desk beside Eric Winslow. Mitchell sat at the front of the class, his back to her. She stared

Taryn glanced at her test mark: 95 per cent. She noticed her one error, then put the test into her yellow folder. Her elbow bumped against her textbook, knocking it onto the floor. She leaned down to retrieve it. Pulling herself up, she noticed Eric intently, purposefully, repeatedly folding his test paper beneath his desktop.

Crease by crease.

Fold on fold.

Into a tight knot of paper.

"Why did you do it?" Taryn asked, running up behind Eric in the school parking lot.

Startled, Eric said, "What?"

"It was you!" Taryn said. "As soon as I saw you folding your Biology test, I knew you put the dead pig in my mailbox."

"You put down Mitchell!" Eric said angrily, not denying Taryn's accusation. "You laughed at him when he fainted. He called you a pig, so I figured that's what you deserved to get."

"Just because he's athletic and smart, doesn't mean he's perfect," Taryn said bitterly. "You don't know him."

"I do so. And I'd do anything to be like him," Eric confessed.

"Don't bother!"

"What do you know that I don't know?" Eric asked.

Taryn hesitated. It would be so



Comment/News

Tony Campolo comes to Kitchener

Ron DeBoer

KITCHENER, Ont. — Dr. Tony Campolo, known to many Christians around the world, was the featured speaker at the recent SAROOTS.CA conference in Kitchener, Ontario. Delegates and guests — mostly from the Salvation Army Church — from around the world descended on Bingeman's Conference Centre from June 28 to July 1 under the theme of "And Can it Be?" to pray, sing and, as the conference brochure I was handed says, "to call Salvationists to biblical Christianity, radical discipleship, contemporary communication of the gospel and a passion for the lost. These are at the 'root' of the Salvation Army and the Christian Church."

Shortly before Campolo took to the stage, Captain Lauren Effer told me, "the conference kicks off a joint partnership between British Salvationists — where the 'Roots' concept originated — and Canadian Salvationists, 'standing together to raise the alarm and call soldiers to renew their commitment to action.'"

For the record, despite all the organizers wearing 'Roots Athletics' sweatshirts at the Conference headquarters, the Roots Clothing Company has nothing to do with the Salvation Army Church. Effer said conference organizers had to scramble to change the name of the conference to SAROOTS (Salvation Army Roots) from its original British name ROOTS so as not to offend the famous apparel company. She assured me the conference was not sponsored by the Roots corporation (much to my relief).

Until all the wild animals go away

Tony Campolo, who appeared on Larry King Live shortly after the September 11 terrorist attacks, is founder of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education (EAPE). If you've ever heard him speak, you'll know Campolo could read the phone book and keep you entertained.

This night, he began with a simple question: "When was the last time you gave God five minutes of utter stillness to show you he loves you?" He then shared how in the early morning when he wakes up he repeats the name of Jesus over and over until all the wild animals go away. "You know," he says, "the wild animals of the day's chores, the day's appointments, the day's decisions, the day's hard work."

He goes on to say, "The name of Jesus has a wonderful way of driving away the demons of everyday



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Tony Campolo (above) gave a challenging message to Salvationists in Kitchener recently.

life." The more you repeat His name — he does it for five to 10 minutes each morning — the more you give over your day to Him.

Let God do the talking

Campolo says that too often we do all the talking when we spend time with God. He urged the audience to "be still" and let God do the talking, likening the process to coming in from the wet and cold and standing in front of a warm fire. God is the fire. Let him love you. Don't say anything. Just feel his warmth.

He recounted an interview between CBS news anchor Dan Rather and Mother Teresa a few years back: Rather asked Mother Teresa what she says when she prays; Mother Teresa replied, "I don't say anything, I listen."

Perplexed, the news anchor asked her what, then, did God say to her, and Mother Teresa replied, "Nothing — he doesn't have to say anything. And if you don't understand that, I can't explain it to you."

Campolo brought home the message of Jesus' salvation, likening Jesus' forgiveness to a teacher who wipes clean the blackboard.

With a blend of humorous storytelling and Biblically based theology, he spoke of the sponge-like way Jesus absorbed all our sins when he hung on the cross. "No sin was left alive when Jesus died. All sin from that day forward was forgotten. Romans 8 says there is no

condemnation because there is nothing to condemn because Jesus took it all upon himself.

"It reminds me," Campolo went on with a glint in his eyes, "of the Roman Catholic Bishop who heard of a woman who claimed Jesus talked to her every Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m. Annoyed, the

Bishop approached the woman and told her there was no way she was speaking directly to Jesus. The woman assured the Bishop Jesus did in fact speak to her.

So one Tuesday morning five minutes before 10:00 a.m., the Bishop came to the woman and said to her, "Prove you talk to Jesus. This morning I brought three sins to confession. Ask Jesus what they were."

The woman went off to speak with Jesus, then returned. The Bishop asked her, "Did He speak to you?" The woman nodded. "Did you ask him to tell you the three sins?" the Bishop asked.

"Yes," the woman replied. "But he forgot them."

Chorus of 'Hallelujahs'

The audience in Kitchener responded in a chorus of 'Hallelujahs' and 'amens.'

Campolo then turned his attention to present-day world events, suggesting that the Americans and Israelis had it all wrong in their response to terrorism. "Can you truly pray for Osama Bin Laden?" he asked the audience. "Or do you hate him enough not to be able to pray for him?

"I love Israel," he went on, squinting at the audience passionately. "But I, too, love the Palestinians. And God loves the Palestinians. I want nothing more than to bring the Muslims to know Jesus Christ. Don't you?"

Everyone in the audience clapped.

"Can we bring the Muslims to Jesus Christ by killing terrorists?"

"No," he said. "Killing a terrorist brings on 10 more terrorists. We need to put patriotism aside and start loving the Muslims. And if people think that's dangerous, then Christianity is in big trouble. If Christianity means going to your comfortable church in the suburbs every Sunday morning then Christianity is in big trouble."

Most of the Canadian audience on hand applauded loudly. One wonders how American Christians might respond.

Campolo ended the evening asking us to be like Jesus. "Did Jesus call Zacheus a dirty rotten, dishonest so-and-so? No, he invited him to dinner. When the prodigal son came home, did the father — symbolic of Jesus — lock the door? No, he welcomed his son home with open arms. He had a celebration.

"We need to celebrate Jesus Christ. When you are good to your neighbor — Muslims included — you put Jesus inside that neighbor, and over time you change the world and create a kingdom filled with joy and love."

You don't have to go to an international conference to hear Tony Campolo. Your church library or local Christian bookstore will likely carry his videotape lectures and books. I'd recommend you check him out if you haven't done so. You'll be lifted up and edified by his words and perspective.

Many First-World nations didn't attend UN food summit

ROME (Zenit.org) — The Vatican's permanent observer at the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said June's food summit was in itself positive, even though most industrialized countries didn't attend.

In an evaluation of the meeting, Monsignor Agostino Marchetto said, "The fact that we met together to discuss such important problems and to renew the commitments made in 1996, must be assessed positively.

"In evaluating such an event, one must ask the question: And if it hadn't been held? Despite its dark and weak aspects, in any event, it attempts to respond to the scandal of 815 million people who suffer hunger in the world," Marchetto pointed out. "The summit was not attended by the principal chiefs of state and government. And this

surely denotes lack of interest. Indeed, when one is concerned, one is present."

Regarding the use of genetically modified foods, he said, "The hunger battle can be won without taking recourse to them. However, this does not mean being closed to the progress of human science — when the latter is combined with concern for the good of the community and respects biodiversity."

Food safety programs begun

The June 10-13 summit in Rome brought together 6,613 participants from 181 countries; 74 heads of state and government; 1,000 organizations (including 550 nongovernmental ones); and 1,600 journalists. Jacques Diouf, FAO's director general, lamented that the press did not give an accurate

picture of the summit. "How can it be said that the summit was useless?" Diouf asked. "For the first time, we were able to study concrete matters and initiate food safety programs in 69 countries."

He admitted, however, that important leaders were missing. "Many chiefs of state of the Pacific, Africa and Latin America came — and too few from the rich world. I do not think it is a good political sign."

Many commentators said there were no concrete, binding and serious decisions resulting from the meeting. The only certainty is that the goal envisioned by the 1996 summit — to halve the number of the world's hungry by 2015 — is proving elusive. Diouf called on the international community to commit \$24 billion voluntarily to reach the goal.

Sports

'Are soccer players our real Gods?'

Frauke Brauns

BIELEFELD, Germany (ENI) — By the time the coin was tossed to determine sides of play in the first match of the 2002 World Cup, a profound football-inspired question was bearing down on fans throughout Germany.

From highway billboards around the country, and from the pages of Germany's major newspapers, came the query: "Are soccer players our real Gods?"

The question is at the heart of the June advertising campaign launched by the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), the country's main Protestant body, to encourage people to think more seriously about what's important in their lives.

What's really essential

Football, the EKD suggests, is not the most important thing in the world. It's "the second most important thing in the world", said Thomas Krueger, EKD spokesperson, hinting that God should take first place.

The EKD's football message is part of a six-month, 1.5 million-euro advertising campaign to encourage the public to think seriously about "what's essential", Krueger told ENI. The EKD campaign is supported by its 24

member churches.

Each month, from March to August 2002, the advertisements are challenging the public to consider a new question, such as, "What is happiness?" or "What do you associate with Easter?" It then offers four possible responses. The choices for this month's football question, for example, are "yes", "no", "maybe" and "don't know."

The EKD invites the public to respond through a telephone hotline, by e-mail or in an Internet discussion forum.

"We want to get into contact with people who are not familiar with church life or who no longer belong to a church," Manfred Kock, the chair of EKD, says in a brochure distributed to church parishes.

Parish groups are encouraged to discuss the ad campaign questions. "It is an opportunity for church members to meet, talk and get to know one another."

In keeping with the current question on football, some parishes have turned their church halls into cafés equipped with TVs to follow the World Cup. The EKD hopes that the people who gather to watch the games will stick around afterwards to discuss the philosophical question posed in its advertising campaign.

Wrestlemania and wounds of battle

Frank DeVries

They are on the tube a lot: muscular megalomorphs slick with oil, which makes them shine, as they say in the old country, like turds in the moonlight. Their oversized deltoids and pectorals invoke awe and wonder. They have bulging muscles on top of their bulging muscles, and they don't simply walk, but swagger and strut like narcissistic peacocks on the prowl. They are the heroes of the W.W.F., the World Wrestling Federation. Am I jealous?

After awaking in the morning I usually shave my neck making sure the bottom outline of my beard is not unduly impaired. After all, though mousy in color, by now it's pretty well the only half-aesthetically pleasing thing I've got left. Following this, I adjust the bathroom scale indicator to make sure that when I weigh myself I get the precise, exact weight. Invariably I am discouraged, because the scale often indicates a pound or so over

the weight I should be according to my B.M.I. — between 160 and 165 pounds. I then plan not to have my glass of home-made red wine before dinner. I am good at planning.

The naked truth

A glance in the large bathroom mirror confronts me with the naked truth. The familiar indications of time's ravages are all there: age spots, hair sprouting from unseemly orifices, and sagging muscles vying for room twixt the wrinkles of the belly and the hocks. Together with the scars of operations and other wounds of battle, they make the entire apparition look like a crumpled-up map of the Balkans.

Yes, I guess I am jealous. Or am I?

Flipping through the tube the other day, I watched part of a W5 documentary about a wrestling star from Winnipeg named Chris Irvine, whose stage name, or

Brothers and sisters

After the Buzzer

Tim Antonides



Mile 287, Montana. A couple weeks ago, I'm on my way to Illinois to start graduate school. I'm sitting at a picnic table at a rest stop by the side of Interstate 90, eating a bowl of Raisin Bran. As usually happens to me in these situations (for some reason), I am accosted by a stranger. A 50-ish lady (trying desperately to look 30) walks up to the table. She has seen me drive in with my B.C. license plates and is wondering if I might know her nephew in Winnipeg. I think hard and decide that I don't. We talk a little bit more about Canada and the U.S., the price of gas, terrorism, diet pop, et al.

God bless you, brother!

Suddenly, she sees my "Surrey Christian School" T-shirt. Her eyes light up. "Oh my gosh," she cries. "A believer! God bless you, brother!"

She quickly calls across a dozen picnic tables filled with resting vacationers to her husband who is over at their RV making some mirror adjustments. "Gordon, there's a brother in the Lord here! Come on!"

Now I have a personal space the size of Texas but Irene, in her name turns out to be, gives me a bear hug. And I mean a rib crushing, mind-numbing bear hug. I'm not a real huggy guy with strangers, so when my paralyzed diaphragm allows me to take a breath again, I awkwardly shake her hand. Gordon has arrived by this time and pumps my arm vigorously, slapping me on the back. "You love Jesus! That makes you a friend!"

Long-distance trips can be lonely. My wife Monica was going to be flying out to Illinois 10 days later. I was on my own and the only human beings I'd had any contact with were a couple of campground owners and the twangy drawlers on the country music stations. At first, I enjoyed this little interaction with Irene and Gordon. But there was also something that didn't sit right.

We need to be careful how we relate to both non-Christians and to Christians in front of non-believers. So many times, I have seen

Christians say dumb and insensitive things that inadvertently put up more walls between them and the unbeliever. I've done it too. Two brothers slamming a pastor's preaching and leadership in front of their non-Christian nephew. A smiley-faced couple telling their non-Christian friends that Jesus makes all your marital problems go away. Irene and Gordon's problem is that, though they celebrate someone's relationship with the Lord (and that is worth celebrating), they make it obvious to others that they are more accepting of and open to believers. This perpetuates the stereotype that Christians are hypocritical, judgmental, and narrow-minded.

Let's stop drawing more lines

I've been thinking about this stuff long before my rest stop encounter. I started to notice how some Christians viewed professional athletes. It seems to be very important to some Christians which athletes (or actors, people on *Survivor*, etc.) are believers and which are not. Suddenly, a basketball player who plays poorly and shows little character on the court is a hero because he is a Christian. Or we speculate about whether certain superstars are believers or not. And it's often done in the company of the non-believer.

We need to stop drawing more lines and categorizing people so readily. It has to be possible to be a witness in the world and still relate to one another as human beings.

Tolerance of someone doesn't mean acceptance of their world view.

And, please, ask a stranger before you hug his guts out.



Tim Antonides teaches Grade 8 and is a basketball coach at Surrey Christian School in Surrey, B.C.

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News Analysis/Opinion

G8 leaders discuss the future of Africa in their mountain retreat

Harry der Nederlanden

The G8 Summit, which brought together the leaders from the eight most powerful countries in the world, is over. Many millions were spent for security by the government, huge efforts expended by a large number of non-governmental groups to influence the leaders and shape public opinion, and a large number of businesses lost money as people avoided areas in Calgary and Ottawa where the demonstrators were active – all so that a few heads of state could spend two days

talking about a handful of issues.

In the Canadian media, the issues discussed at the meeting and those raised by the protesters received considerable attention. Not so in the major newspapers and newscasts in the U.S. The stories that did appear didn't make the front page, and most focused on the lack of violence by either the demonstrators or the police – quite a change after the last few G8 summits, which brought street battles and millions in property damage.

Kananaskis off-limits to protestors

The meetings took place in Kananaskis, a resort town about 120 km west of Calgary, but the town was off-limits to anyone else seeking to put in a word or two. All the rest of the town was taken over by soldiers and cops. More than 1,000 soldiers equipped with anti-aircraft guns, among other things, were deployed around the town. No Lazarus could get near to eat the crumbs that fell from the tables of our rich, well-fed leaders.

Those demonstrating against the effects of globalization had to be content with marching through the streets of Calgary, for there was no room for them, not even a field, in Kananaskis. Even in Calgary they couldn't get a central place to set up, as City Hall forbade them the use of public parks. In Ottawa, too, representatives from more than a dozen different groups and a dozen more causes organized marches on the Parliament buildings to make their various points.

Focus on Middle East, Africa, security

Why have these meetings of the Group of Eight (G8) nations drawn such vehement protests? If you've followed the news at all, you'll know that the big topic of discussion on the first day was how to bring peace to the bleeding Middle East and that on the second day – Chretien himself pledged it – the big men would look into their respective coffers to set aside more of their wealth to aid the starving, disease crippled nations of Africa.

How to provide greater security against terrorism, particularly nuclear terrorism, was also on the agenda. Why on earth could so many groups galvanize their members to protest against duly elected heads of state gathering to plan such legitimate, laudable goals?

The meetings of the G8 began in 1975 in the face of a global economic crisis. Because these eight countries – Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the U.S. (Canada and Russia joined later) – controlled almost 70 per cent of the world's economy, they had the clout to shape new ways to keep the global economy healthy. Their economic policies are implemented through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the

World Bank. The way to economic health, as these countries have defined it, is by strengthening the machinery of global capitalism through deregulation, privatization and liberalization.

Integrating African economies

In order to win loans and investment capital, the weak, tottering economies of the South had to agree to cut back on domestic spending and to make more basic resources available for export to the markets in the North, where most of the manufacturing takes place. So G8 leaders speak of integrating the economies of Africa into the global economic system so that they can share more fully in the wealth created there.

It is here – on the matter of what kind of economic system makes life better – that the protesters part company with the G8 planners.

It is true that among the G8 critics are all sorts of ideologues who detest any form of capitalism and hate multinational corporations. They see the capitalists raping and laying waste the planet and see economics largely in terms of a struggle between the rich and the poor: what is good for the former is inevitably bad for the latter.

But the ideologues are not just present on the side of the protesters. Western economists and politicians can envision only one way to create prosperity – by buying into the model of unlimited economic growth. Nor are all the protesters to be ranked in the camp of the ideologues.

Making Africa more dependent

The critics point out, among other things, that the conditions under which the proposed additional

Beacons of hope**Sini den Otter**

It was quite an experience for me to be present at the opening day of Synod 2002, as part of a group of chaplains. The Chaplaincy of the Christian Reformed Church is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. This historic event was noted with a beautiful liturgy illustrating the different ministries that chaplains are involved in, and also with short stories portraying the ways in which lives have been touched by the ministry of chaplains.

I have been thinking about my experiences at Synodical gatherings. The first time I attended such a meeting was in 1989. I remember feeling quite out of place then. I was not spoken to very much by the others members of Synod and was not included in the activities or discussions. If it had not been for the caring attitude of the chaplains, I would never have gone back to another such meeting. But the chaplains included me, even though for them, too, it was unusual to have a woman in their midst.

Please stay on the periphery

As I reflect on the years that have passed since that first Synod meeting, I notice that men are now more relaxed around women. Perhaps the fear of the unknown is gone. There is more openness to give women credit for their ability to think and speak about issues at hand. At the same time, however, it was still very hard for me to observe an all-male assembly at Synod. Though women advisers were present, they were seated separately, almost as if to say: we like you to be here, but please stay on the periphery....

A number of years ago already, the Chaplain Committee fortunately had the vision to endorse female lay persons as chaplains, this at a time when women could not be ordained as ministers. These women had gone through intensive clinical pastoral education programs and obtained theological degrees from accredited institutions. I was one of the chaplains who was endorsed as a woman chaplain. Right now, a decade or so later, there are 11 female chaplains serving our denomination.

Chaplains are slowly making progress in getting recognized as being qualified as ministers. I thank God that I was able, through the foresight of the Chaplain Committee, to obtain my certification and endorsement as a chaplain. The process in my own church did not happen without obstacles, but there, too, it was blessed. And so it became possible

Building Trust
Vicky Van Andel Ed.

for me to be employed as a hospital chaplain and to work with people in great need. I have had many rich experiences through my work as chaplain. As well, I have met many courageous people who called forth questions within myself; who touched the vulnerable spots in my life. One of the questions that continues to surface for me from time to time is: "How am I going to die, and how will I deal with letting go of who and what is dear to me?"

The many issues we face in this world as followers of Christ is wrapped up in the ultimate question: "What have we done with the gifts God has given us? Have we listened to that inner voice that called us to ministry, even if the church did not approve of women in such a role? Have we been able to sort out why we followed that inner voice? Was it to claim our personhood or to listen to the call of God, or a combination of the two?" These are difficult questions to answer. However, the fruit of our ministry is able to speak for itself. We see God's blessing rest on it. And that is our comfort.

May we continue to experience God's grace as we struggle with the texts in the Bible in which Paul urges women to be silent in the church. Personally, I have found peace with these texts by making a distinction between the words of Paul and the words and deeds of Jesus. For me, the words of Paul were steeped in the patriarchal tradition of his time, while Jesus came to serve as our liberator and redeemer.

I claim the freedom that Jesus brings, and often repeat to myself these words of Jesus: "Do not hinder that for which I came to die, and for which I overcame death to bring new life and new beginnings." I can only say that I have lived under the guidance of God's spirit. I have done this with the limited vision of the time in which I live and a past that I have inherited. I have also done this using the gifts God has given me through grace.

*Sini Den Otter is an ordained hospital chaplain in Edmonton, and the author of *Binder of Wounds*, a book of reflections.*

Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact Vicky Van Andel via fax at: 1-780-473-0970, or by e-mail at: vanandel@oanet.com



The Kenyan countryside, with Mount Kilimanjaro in the background. One G-8 protestor declared: "Africa's future should no more be decided in the Canadian Rockies than Canada's future should be decided in the highlands of Kenya."

ROBERT FRERICK

News Analysis/News Survey

aid will come to Africa are the same ones that have been in place at the IMF and World Bank for over 20 years. During that time these so-called "solutions" to Africa's misery have served only to make Africa more dependent and its people poorer, while draining away scads of natural resources at bargain-basement prices. Although exports from Africa have risen almost 30 per cent, for example, the monies they have earned on these exports have dropped 40 per cent.

At the insistence of the IMF and World Bank, these nations began exporting more raw materials for the global economy, but this caused a huge drop in prices. So, as it works out, the rich manufacturing nations have benefitted at the cost of the poorer, less developed ones.

Aid has dropped sharply

Although the G8 countries have repeatedly resolved to do better by their African brothers, over the last 10 years aid from the rich to the poorest countries has dropped by 56 per cent in real dollars. Moreover, Canada gives a huge portion of its aid on the condition that the country receiving it will spend it in Canada. In 1992 it was 44 per cent; today it is 75 per cent of our aid that is given on this condition. This helps our industries; many aid experts, however, say that such an arrangement harms development in the poor countries. A recent World Bank study (cited by John Wiebe of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada in the *Globe and Mail*) also shows that Canada imposes much higher tariffs on imports from the least developed countries than it does on its trading partners who belong to the G8.

"The critics of globalization accuse Western countries of hypocrisy, and the critics are right," charges Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz. "The Western countries have pushed poor countries to eliminate trade barriers, but kept up their own barriers, preventing developing countries from exporting their agricultural products and so depriving them of desperately needed export income."

Alternative to starvation

"The rich countries," wrote William Johnson in the *National Post*, "with a tiny fraction of their work force in farming, can afford to support their farmers with a range of subsidies, even though it means higher taxes and overproduction. But dirt-poor African farmers cannot be subsidized and they cannot compete with subsidized imports that often sell at



An all-star line-up: G8 leaders in the Rockies. From left: Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, U.S. President George W. Bush, French President Jacques Chirac, Jean Chrétien, Russian President Vladimir Putin, British PM Tony Blair, and Japanese PM Junichiro Koizumi.

RICK WILKING/REUTERS

prices below local farmers' costs of production. For them, farming is not just another industry, it's their alternative to starvation."

The proposals for aid to Africa adopted by G8 were contained in the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) drawn up by South African President Thabo Mbeki, Nigerian leader Olusegun Obasanjo and Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade. It was composed in Africa, but a meeting of intellectuals in Nairobi, Kenya, criticized it sharply. They argued that the agreement merely served to clear the path for "presidential authoritarian regimes that now claim to be democracies all over the continent." At another meeting in Accra, Ghana, critics called NEPAD nothing but a recycling of theories that have failed for two decades in Africa.

NEPAD doomed to failure

Robert Jamieson, editor of *The Chronicle* in Malawi, said that NEPAD is a great theory but doomed to failure: "Good governance and zero tolerance of corruption — it's a good initiative, but we're dealing with African leaders who have no perception of what's right and what's proper."

President Mbeki, however, speaking at a news conference after the G8 meetings, refused to criticize Canada or any of the other G8 nations.

A number of other human rights and development groups, including Amnesty International, Oxfam, and Doctors Without Borders all delivered swift criticism of the African assistance plan, according to the *National Post*.

Mark Fried, with Oxfam Canada, said what's been pledged won't even meet basic needs.

Njoki Njoroge Njehu, of the aid group 50 Years Is Enough, said it is

all about privatization, foreign ownership and less spending on social programs. She was upset that NEPAD was drawn up without consulting Africa's poorest people. "Africa's future should no more be decided in the Canadian Rockies than Canada's future should be decided in the highlands of Kenya," said Njehu.

New labels on old policies

"The G8 leaders should have come down from their mountain retreat to see what Africa really needs," said Ian Gary, of Catholic Relief Services, who was in Calgary monitoring the summit. "The G8 response to NEPAD puts new labels on old policies and repackages previous commitments."

Specifically, he criticized the plan for failing to introduce concrete timelines, binding commitments and significant financial resources for overseas development assistance and programs to address the continent's health crisis. Gary noted that despite recent pledges of increased bilateral aid to Africa from some of the G-8 partners, including the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, foreign assistance to the continent still falls far short — by \$25-30 billion of what the World Bank estimates is needed for Africa to cut poverty in half by 2015.

With respect to efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, which is ravaging the African continent at a rate of 6,000 new infections daily, Gary said the Africa Action Plan did not reflect the deadly urgency of responding to Africa's health crisis. "Any progress on other fronts will be unraveled by the AIDS pandemic. Rolling back the tide on AIDS and other deadly diseases must be at the heart of both NEPAD and the G-8 response," Gary said, according to the Catholic news service ZNET.

On laws, judges, religion and throwing stones

Harry der Nederlanden

In late June the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that using vouchers to educate children at religious schools is constitutional. The decision, made by a 5-4 vote, was hailed as a landmark in the struggle to obtain public funds for those attending non-secular schools.

The Supreme Court overturned an opinion by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals that a system introduced in Cleveland, Ohio violated the separation of church and state because most of the schools in which vouchers are used are religious ones. The Cleveland program gives a family a voucher of as much as \$2,250 in state funds for tuition cost at a secular or religious school of its choice.

Low-income families living in areas where public education is inferior are given priority. About 4,000 Cleveland students have used the vouchers to transfer from inner-city schools to more than 50 private schools, most of them religious ones.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "It will empower parents, and it will force public schools to compete, in that they will no longer have a captive audience of the nation's poor and working poor."

"This was a religious liberty case," Land said. "The principle at stake was: 'If the government chooses to offer a benefit — in this case vouchers — to parents, should

it be able then to discriminate against religious institutions and say they are the only ones that cannot receive the vouchers?' We believe, along with the Supreme Court, the answer to that is an emphatic 'No.'"

Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State called it "clearly the worst church-state decision in the past 50 years. The Supreme Court has taken a wrecking ball to the wall of separation between church and state. Unfortunately, the court has approved forcing taxpayers to pay for religious indoctrination."

Christian school supporters in the U.S. are not yet celebrating. The Supreme Court decision will not end the passionate debate over "school choice" in the U.S.

The law varies from state to state and will have to be decided by referendums and court cases. Aside from Ohio, only two states, Wisconsin and Florida, have enacted voucher programs to date. In other states, the proposal has been consistently defeated in referendums. Two years ago voters in California and Michigan rejected similar voucher plans by large majorities. Entrenched public-school interests

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On laws, judges, religion and throwing stones

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have stalled legislative proposals for vouchers in 20 other states.

Polls indicate that voters are split on the issue. A Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation survey last summer showed that 50 percent of Americans opposed providing parents with vouchers, while 45 percent approved of the idea. Support for vouchers appears to be stronger among inner-city residents than among suburban voters.

Many voucher supporters have argued that the program gives poor children, many of them black, the range of choice available to middle-class families. As in Ontario, supporters for choice in education in the U.S. often appeal to libertarian and free-market principles, arguing that marketplace competition is the best way to force public schools to improve.

The decision also raises the prospect of new legal battles over what strings might be attached for schools that receive public monies through the voucher system. Some Baptists have opposed the voucher system for that very reason. Others warn that it may open the door to public monies for radical Muslim schools that teach values repugnant to America.

Justice Breyer predicted that the decision would prove highly divisive in a country with "more than 55 different religious groups." He predicted many struggles, asking, "How will the public react to government funding for schools that take controversial religious positions on topics that are of current popular interest — say, the conflict in the Middle East or the war on terrorism?"

In reply, Chief Justice Rehnquist said "the program has ignited no 'divisiveness' or 'strife' other than this litigation."

Pledge of allegiance debate

Another decision from a U.S. district court that had citizens in the U.S. standing up with their hands on their hearts: the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the phrase "under God" in the pledge of allegiance is unconstitutional. So while the Supreme Court is moving in the direction of removing laws that ban religion from the public realm, the Ninth District is still trying to wholly secularize it. The three-man panel ruled two to one that the reference to God, which was added to the pledge by Congress in 1954, amounts to an official endorsement of monotheism.

Thus, the court said that both the 1954 law and a California school district's policy requiring teachers



American Coast Guard cadets assemble as the flag is carried by President Bush called the pledge of allegiance court decision "ridiculous."

to lead children to recite the pledge violate the First Amendment prohibition against the establishment of a state religion. "A profession that we are a nation 'under God' is identical... to a profession that we are a nation 'under Jesus,' a nation 'under Vishnu,' a nation 'under Zeus,' or a nation 'under no god,' because none of these professions can be neutral with respect to religion," said Judge Alfred T. Goodwin, a Republican appointee.

The case was brought by an atheist, who did not want his daughter to have to recite the pledge in her second-grade class. If the ruling is allowed to stand (and by all appearances it won't), schoolchildren could no longer recite the pledge, at least in the nine western states covered by the court.

President Bush led politicians of both parties in a chorus of denunciation, saying that the court's decision was "ridiculous." Members of the House of Congress gathered on the front steps of the Capitol to recite the Pledge of Allegiance, and the Senate unanimously approved a resolution sponsored by both parties that expressed support for the reference to God in the pledge, and instructed the Senate's legal counsel to intervene.

Some conservative observers warned that the ruling may open the door to the prohibition of the words "In God We Trust" on the nation's currency, the public singing of patriotic songs like "God Bless America," or even the recitation of the phrase "So help me God" used when judges are sworn into office.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said: "The Supreme Court itself begins each of its sessions with the phrase 'God save the United States and this honorable court.' The Declaration of Inde-

pendence refers to God or to the creator four different times. Congress begins each session of the Congress each day with a prayer, and, of course, our currency says, 'In God We Trust.' The view of the White House is that this was a wrong decision and the Department of Justice is now evaluating how to seek redress."

Experts interviewed on television seemed to agree that the ruling would almost certainly be overturned by the Supreme Court. The Ninth Circuit has been overturned more frequently than any other court of appeals.

Fierce opposition to new international court

Because the UN Security Council refused to grant the small contingent of Americans serving there immunity from the world's first permanent war crimes court, the United States vetoed a six-month extension of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. The Bush administration has been exerting strong pressure to get exemption for U.S. citizens from the reach of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which comes into existence July 1 despite fierce U.S. opposition. The ICC claims jurisdiction over all instances of so-called war crimes, even by citizens of countries that have not signed on.

U.S. and European officials said Washington is exploring ways to determine whether the NATO force in Bosnia, which includes a contingent of about 3,100 U.S. troops, can remain in place.

The treaty creating the criminal court has been signed by 138 countries and ratified by 74. The ICC, which will be based in The Hague, was established to prosecute dictators and war criminals for the most

serious crimes, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Clinton signed the treaty in December 2000, but the Bush administration renounced it, arguing that the tribunal might conduct politically motivated trials against Americans. That hardly seems likely given the present make-up of the court, but the U.S. fears that those hostile to the U.S. may one day gain control of the court as has happened in the UN Human Rights Commission.

The veto would force the 1,536 UN police officers to halt their work in Bosnia, where they have been training police officers to overcome the ethnic strife that led to years of civil war.

"I don't know whether this Bosnia police force is ready to stand on its own two feet alone," said Fred Eckhart, UN chief spokesman.

Sunk to its lowest level

Canada and Europe have been strong supporters of the ICC and have called the U.S. hypocritical for refusing to institutionalize international law. "The United States is pitting international law against international peacekeeping," said William R. Pace, of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court. "The U.S. has sunk to its lowest level in its moral and political leadership at the U.N."

The U.S., however, is the object of considerable resentment abroad. There have been serious voices raised accusing U.S. presidents and Henry Kissinger of war crimes in their conduct of the Vietnam war, and Belgium recently sought to indict Israel's President Sharon for war crimes committed against Palestinians. Yet, virtual dictators like Mugabe in Zimbabwe are not even chastised by other African leaders for crimes committed against their own citizens.

Any world court will inevitably be as much a political as a judicial creature. And there is no guarantee that such a court will continue to be ruled by Western notions of justice. Even these have been in flux as the judiciary has become defined more and more as an agent of social change and we have witnessed all sorts of judicial activism.

Rough justice

If you think the idea of law and justice is pretty much the same in all cultures, here are a few newsbits. Under Muslim law in Nigeria people continue to be condemned to death by stoning for moral offences such as committing adultery.

In Pakistan among one tribal

group a young girl was sentenced to gang rape by the town elders — not for anything she did, but because her brother was caught walking with a girl in a deserted part of town. Why was that an offense? She was from an upper caste tribe and he from a lower. The boy was 11 years old.

Closer to home. About a month ago, charges were brought against a Saudi princess traveling in the US for beating her Indonesian maid and throwing her down the stairs. Through her lawyer, the princess was allowed to plead no contest to a misdemeanor, pay a \$1,000 fine and write a letter of regret about injuries to her maid. The maid won't be testifying against her former employer. After she returned to Indonesia for a funeral, the U.S. refused to renew her visa on the grounds that she might try to stay in the U.S. country illegally. Meanwhile, the Saudi princess retains her status and can travel where she pleases. Home maid justice.

If a recent Russian bill passes into law, any religious group whose leaders foment "religious extremism" will be banned in Russia. It will be a crime to belong to such a group. Among the actions classified as "extremism": "the incitement of racial, ethnic or religious discord or social discord in connection with violence or calls for violence; humiliation of national dignity; the propaganda of exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of citizens on account of their attitude towards religion, social status, race, nationality, religion, or language."

If Christians claim that the only way to be saved is through faith in Christ, that is, by becoming a Christian, are they making a claim of exclusivity or superiority? If a Russian religious leader says that his country is committing an injustice of some kind, is he guilty of humiliating the "national dignity"? This law has enough teeth to devour almost any group.

Russia is by no means the only country contemplating such laws. France and several eastern European countries have been trying to write laws that will make belonging to a religious group the government considers undesirable a crime. All of them are looking for ways to contain a possible "clash of civilizations" or religious conflict within their borders, usually by forcibly privatizing all expressions of faith. It will not just be "politically incorrect" to promote ones convictions about the nature of public justice and order on the basis of religious beliefs; it will be a crime similar to fomenting racial hatred.

News Comment

Hose for Hose



Bert Hielema

WE ALL HAVE TO EAT. That's not the point. It's how and what we eat that matters. Eating is big business. More than big tobacco, more than drugs and alcohol, the Number One threat to our treasured kids are Big Helpings and Big Food. Big Helpings heap on weight; Big Food doesn't care about nourishment, laces our fare with fat, sugar and salt, and will make only products that sell, regardless of its nutritional value or its effect on health.

In his book *Fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser writes that our McDonalds and Harveys have hastened the malling of America, have widened the chasm between rich and poor, have caused an epidemic of obesity and have transformed the globe, now better known as McWorld. Fast food has swift legs, has, in no time, sped to China, to Russia, is truly universal.

We all have to eat. People's beliefs about food are on a par with sex and religion: most of us are scientific illiterates and believe the impossible where our stomachs are concerned: we swallow Froot Loops, a cereal which contains no fruit or fibre and with 53 per cent of its calories coming from sugar. Add a 20 oz. bottle of coke and you have a perfect recipe for nutritional disaster, all approved by our federally sponsored dietary guidelines. The Food Industry is so powerful that, if they were tobacco companies, they would be allowed to sell cigarettes as 'healthier' or 'with added vitamins.'

We all have to eat. That's the dubious reason advertising is allowed on the computers our kids use in school, not for alcohol or cigarettes, of course, but for the equally deadly junk foods, candies and soft drinks that foster fat in kids and guarantee future health ills. The government should tax these before they kill the next generation, and subsidize apples, broccoli, tomatoes — the good stuff.

We all have to eat. What then shall we eat since we are or become what we eat? Good question. The world's oldest medical advice is likely from Hippocrates, who lived about 2,400 years ago: "Let your

food be your medicine and your medicine be your food." A range of foods is needed. The staple diet of my Dutch farming grandparents was potatoes and buttermilk porridge, compensated by lots of exercise, fresh air, healthy communities.

We all have to eat, so let's begin with breakfast. We need lots of Vitamin C or AA = Ascorbic Acid, an anti-oxidant found in oranges, strawberries, kiwi fruit, pineapple, raw cauliflower or spinach. Take your pick, but use one of these every day.

Oatmeal is an excellent start. Oat fibre tends to lower fats in the blood and also provides lots of bulk, which makes you feel full so you eat less. Have it with orange juice or grapefruit, and don't forget a few cups of black or green tea, which have certain chemicals that stop the formation of cancers of the breast, colon and pancreas. Tea also contains antibodies preventing allergies, arthritis, as well as the ability to kill off viruses. It makes bowel movements more regular and keeps people smiling, as it inhibits the growth of bacteria that cause cavities and gum disease.

If you mix some walnuts with your oatmeal, some black raspberries or blueberries, and pieces of apple, you not only do good for your heart, but for every apple, you add 1,500 mg of Vitamin C to your body which increases your immune system. Remember the old saying: Eat breakfast like an emperor, lunch like a king, and dinner like a pauper.

IF YOU START THE DAY with a cigarette and black coffee, have a donut or two for lunch and a heavy meat meal at night, you better make a will and an early date with your life insurance agent.

Lunch: Generally all brightly colored fruit and vegetables are good. Tomatoes prevent prostate cancer: so you men, eat lots of these in whatever form — ketchup, pizza, soup. Apparently cooked is even more effective. In general, men eat less healthily than women, perhaps one of the reasons why they live about five years less than

'the weaker sex.' For extra health insurance add garlic and sweet potatoes, and stay away from lots of meat, except for fish, although fish capsules work just as well.

Of course, none of the above is much good if you never walk or run or bike or if you smoke or have a negative view on life. Stress also kills and causes cancer. I think we can agree that many — and I don't mean you, of course — are overfed and undernourished. By choice.

AFRICA IS THE MOST underfed and undernourished continent, also by choice: ours.

To Chrétien's credit he tried to do something about that. He failed, thanks to you know who. Here is a crazy thought: perhaps we should apply the biblical notion of the first being last and the last being first to the word 'Kananaskis,' — that Alberta hide-out where the G8 met recently — so that it reads Kisanas-kan. That way the undue deference paid to the spoiler of Chrétien's Africa plan, U.S. president Bush, is somehow reflected.

Also, turning the word upside down reflects the state of our topsy-turvy world, where we spend \$300 million on security — enough to give almost every African their daily income, as most of them live on less than one buck a day. Just imagine: Three hundred million dollars so that eight men can chew the fat for 30 hours with time out for exercise, sleep and copious meals! We, in Canada, pledged more than \$5 billion to help our farmers because the U.S.A. has set aside \$160 billion to subsidize the two per cent that ride tractors, pull plows and sow and harvest the crops. Yet, little or no money could be found to help the poorest continent in the world. In Kananaskis, Africans were asking for debt relief. Each year they pay \$15 billion in interest to us. They also wanted help to build roads, access to clean water and to fight AIDS.

To Chrétien's credit, he had placed the African continent on the G8 agenda, moved, as he was, with the plight of the people there, a feeling I share with him.

SOME YEARS AGO, MY wife and I visited our youngest son, who was on a two-year assignment there. We stayed in South Central Africa for three weeks and lost our hearts there. The Big Eight with their small minds dangled a deal before the African leaders: become like us and we will give you \$1 billion relief, and a bit more if you manage to shed your black soul and become white like us.

Africans have a triple burden to

bear. Slavery for centuries has disrupted its social fabric: first they were forcefully removed by the Arabs. When that came to an end, we came along and sold millions of these 'children of Ham' (considered inferior by the whites, on par with animals) as cheap labor for the plantations in the Americas and British colonial possessions. When that stopped in the mid-1800s, colonialism became the vogue, first authoritarian — actual occupation — and now economic exploitation. Both have scorned native culture and superimposed a Western way of life, not at all in sync with the indigenous civilization based on personal relationships and family ties.

THE CURRENT SCOURGE is AIDS. When we were in Africa, we visited a white businessman in his luxurious home, completely walled in, of course. His comment, perhaps not typical, but nevertheless telling, was: "You North Americans were smart in killing your native population, seeing the only good Indian to be a dead Indian. We should have done the same here. Too bad AIDS will not spread fast enough to wipe out all of them."

In a new book, *Globalization and Its Discontents*, written by Dr. Joseph Stiglitz, former chief economist of the World Bank who shared the 2001 Nobel Prize and is now professor at Columbia University, observes that the so-called Third World experts who, presumably, briefed the G8 leaders, have very little knowledge of developing countries outside of the five-star hotels they stay in while 'crunching numbers.'

Says he: "Our leaders piously preach free trade but refuse to open up our agricultural and textile and clothing markets to African suppliers, who can produce much cheaper." Of course — these workers barely make 10 cents per hour. We, in Europe and North America, subsidize our farmers — with our taxes — to grow so much that the inevitable surplus is handed out free to Africa. With a tiny fraction of our work force in farming, we can afford to subsidize agriculture, but the dirt-poor African growers — more than 70 per cent of the total population — cannot compete with give-away grain. So food culture in Africa languishes because there is no market for their products. The result is that with our domestic policies we cause famine in Africa and ruin the lives of millions.

If the G8 leaders were really serious about helping Africa, they would kill all subsidies, help that continent to build a viable way to raise crops, and use the skills of the people there to become the textile and art suppliers for us rich people. Africans are an amazing people: they live for art. What they can do with a piece of wood or clay is simply unbelievable: there is no more talented race than the African, who can fashion the most beautiful objects from the most humble materials.

To refashion them in our image will only result in alcoholism and alienation. Witness what happened to our indigenous folk.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont.

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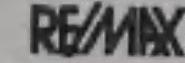
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Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

July 13,14 Lindsay CRC, Lindsay, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with dinner and service. Call 705-328-0177
Fax: 705-328-3156 or E-mail: lawlms@sympatico.ca

Aug 24 Clinton & District Christian School 40th year reunion. For information on events, call 519-482-7851.

Sep 18 Classis Niagara meeting 4p.m. at Providence CRC, Beamsville, Ont. See ad this issue for more details.

Oct 5,6 Bethel CRC of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan 50th anniversary. See ad this issue for details.

Oct 19,20 First CRC of Chilliwack B.C. 50th anniversary For info & billeting: call Erna Maarhuis 604-794-7140 or e-mail pjonda@telus.net

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Oshawa - CKDO 8:00 am 1350
Owen Sound - CFOS 7:00 am 560
Pembroke - CHVR 10:00 am 96.7
Sarnia - CHOK 7:30 am 1070
Stratford - CJCS 8:45 am 1240
Windsor - CKLW 7:30 am 800
Wingham - CKNX 10:30 am 920

NEW BRUNSWICK
Saint John - CHSJ 9:00 am 94.1

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
Charlottetown - CFCY 7:00 am 630

ALBERTA
Lethbridge - CJIL Thursday - 9:00 am
Saturday - 2:00 am

ONTARIO - CTS
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ATLANTIC - NB, NS, PEI - 6pm Sun

NFLD - 6:30 Sun.

MANITOBA
Altona - CFAM 9:30 am 950
Steinbach - CHSM 9:30 am 1250
Winnipeg - CKJS 9:00 am 810

ONTARIO
Atikokan - CFAK 9:30 am 1240
Chatham - CFCO 6:30 am 630
Fort Frances - CFOB 9:30 am 640
Guelph - CJOY 8:30 am 1460
Hamilton - CHAM 7:30 am 820
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News

Change of leadership, expanding focus at Ontario Christian School Teachers Association

Alan Doerksen

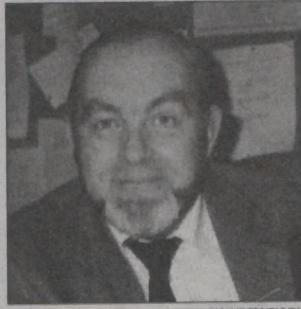
ANCASTER, Ont. — In the 14 years since he took over the helm of Ontario Christian School Teachers Association, (OCSTA), Hank Hultink has seen his job description expand from four brief lines to two-and-a-half pages. Similarly, the work of OCSTA has expanded. Now Hultink is about to retire, with veteran teacher and principal Hilda Roukema set to take over as executive director August 1.

In 1988, Hultink became "the first paid employee and first executive director" of OCSTA, he tells *Christian Courier*. OCSTA started up in the 1960s, but before 1988 had been run by volunteers. That had become difficult to do for volunteers already burdened with their day-jobs, and more structure was needed for OCSTA to work efficiently.

Into Samaria

Although at first Hultink's main focus was to "look after the teachers," he and OCSTA have been expanding their horizons in recent years. "We've gone beyond Jerusalem into Samaria," is how Hultink expresses it. "We want to offer our services to a wider group."

That wider group includes "Christian schoolteachers in the public system," explains Hultink. "They need some kind of vehicle



ROBERT VANDERVENNE

Hank Hultink

to get their batteries recharged. We want to be supportive of them." OCSTA also wants to be more supportive of home-schoolers.

OCSTA identifies itself, on its website, as "the professional association for educators in Ontario Christian schools which are affiliated with ... the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS)." OCSTA is a voluntary association of more than 700 full-time and part-time teachers which provides services, information and advice to its members on subjects such as teacher certification and evaluation, contractual matters, health needs, counseling and legal assistance. Each year, OCSTA runs a two-day convention, as well as numerous professional development one-day courses.

"The scope has become substantial," says Hultink, describing

the variety of services now offered by OCSTA. "We're in effect the equivalent of the Ontario Teachers Federation" — which represents public schoolteachers.

All this happens with only two full-time employees at OCSTA's office at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont.: Hultink and his executive assistant, Susan Miller. But some of OCSTA's work is delegated to seven committees run by OCSTA members, which focus on matters such as professional development, credentials, and promotion.

Hultink and OCSTA work closely with OACS, he notes. "We did that right from the outset. By and large, our relationship has been harmonious and supportive."

Hultink looks ahead

Looking ahead, Hultink says he has "nothing official in the works" for retirement projects. But he will remain active as a board member of Calvin Seminary, and as a council member of Ancaster Christian Reformed Church (his home congregation). Hultink also hopes to do some substitute teaching. "I still like the classroom," he asserts.

On the recreational side of things, Hultink adds, "I've got a boat sitting in the driveway" which was not in the water at all last year, and "a substantial yard I like to work in."

Before working with OCSTA,

Hultink worked with Calvin Christian School in Hamilton, Ont., for 22 years — 19 of them as principal.

Roukema takes over

Taking over the helm of OCSTA August 1 will be Hilda Roukema (see photo on p. 1), who has been principal of John Knox Christian School in Brampton, Ont., for the past seven years. Before that, she worked for 10 years with Toronto District Christian High in Woodbridge, Ont. — five of those years as Vice-Principal.

Roukema also spent a year in the early '90s writing *Thy Kingdom Come* Christian school Bible curricula for Grades 9 and 10, and Grades 11 and 12.

In her new role, Roukema plans to raise the image and profile of OCSTA, both among its members, and externally — to the Ontario College of Teachers (in the public school system), for instance. Among OCSTA members, Roukema would like to raise awareness of what the agency does. "You know we have a good thing to offer, and let's not keep it a secret," she asserts.

Hultink wrote in a recent report on the OCSTA website that he and Roukema have "worked together for decades." He describes her as "a well-established Ontario Christian school educator of good repute.... On Hilda's part, that's a lifelong commitment."

News Digest

Spam a hit in Hawaii

HONOLULU, Hawaii (Ananova) — Although Internet surfers hate Spam, many Hawaiians love it. One of the most popular Spam dishes currently served in Hawaii is Spam musubi, which consists of a strip of cooked Spam, on a block of rice and held in place by a sushi-style seaweed girdle.

McDonald's restaurants are now testing a new breakfast meal made of Spam, including egg and rice, in their restaurants in Hawaii. Spam is extremely popular in the state and the new meal is being sold in every McDonald's restaurant there.

McDonald's says it will serve the breakfast until the end of July and then decide if it is selling well enough to add to a menu that already includes rice, and Portuguese sausage, reports the *Pacific Business News*.

Price based on temperature

VALENCIA, Spain (Terra.es) — A Spanish hotel is basing its prices on daily temperatures during July and August. The promotion is being run by the Astoria Palace Hotel in Valencia.



Manager Juan Torregrosa says guests will be charged the same price as the temperature taken at a certain time each day. If the temperature is 32 degrees Celsius, they will be charged 32 euros, and if it falls to 19 degrees they'll be charged 19 euros.

Torregrosa told the Terra.es website: "One of our employees will check the thermometer every day at 3 p.m., and customers will be charged accordingly."

Sign popular for bikers

CHARLESTON, S.C. — In Harleyville, S.C., the town limits sign has disappeared from the same spot for the fourth time in five years, reports *USA Today* online. And town officials think they know who has the signs: Harley-Davidson fans.

A motorcycle shop owner says swiping Harleyville signs, which have been spotted as far away as Florida, is a point of pride among some bikers. "I've seen them coming with a beer in one hand and a sign in the other like I'd give them a brownie point or something," he said.

Partnerships key part of CRWRC's work in Haiti

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Partnerships with local agencies are a key part of Christian Reformed World Relief Committee's work in Haiti, according to Tricia Vanderkooy. She has spent the past three years working as a program consultant with CRWRC in Haiti.

"All our work in Haiti happens through partners," explains Vanderkooy. CRWRC works with seven Haitian agencies, including PWOFOF (which trains and empowers deacons in Haitian churches to help others) and FAJ (the Federation of Youth Associations). While in Haiti, Vanderkooy worked with both of those agencies. With PWOFOF, she helped with literacy work and training deacons.

"Most of my work has been with FAJ," says Vanderkooy. "They do civic education and AIDS awareness with young adults." Civic education includes

such basics as explaining what a birth certificate is for. Most Haitians don't have legal documents, but they need birth certificates to buy houses, among other situations.

Democracy's not there yet

Many Haitians also lack knowledge of what the government does, asserts Vanderkooy. This is because there have been "200 years of dictatorships" on Haiti, and although there is now democracy "on paper," "it isn't even there yet" in reality, and Haitians "really don't have freedom of speech."

Working with FAJ, Vanderkooy helped write training lessons and presented seminars. With PWOFOF, she helped conduct diaconal training. "The deacons will organize literacy classes and microcredit groups," she notes.

In March 1996, *Christian Courier* profiled the work of PWOFOF. Working mostly in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince,



COURTESY CRWRC

Tricia Vanderkooy

PWOFOF's longterm goal is to empower the disadvantaged urban poor in that city. About half of the population of Port-au-Prince lives in slum conditions.

Matching dollars

Vanderkooy also helped fundraise for PWOFOF — a process she prefers to call "local fund development." She emphasizes that CRWRC's partner agencies in

Haiti are working toward a goal of matching each donor dollar raised in other countries with one dollar raised in Haiti itself.

One new initiative of CRWRC is a partnership with the Christian Reformed Church of Haiti. Together, they are starting to build a new ministry centre in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince. "They're in Phase One — still looking to purchase the land," explains Vanderkooy. One purpose of the centre will be to hold special literacy events.

During June, Vanderkooy traveled through Ontario to speak at churches and schools. Traveling with her was Kerline Toussaint, a volunteer co-ordinator of FAJ from Haiti, who works with civic education and AIDS training.

Next, Vanderkooy will start a two-year Masters of International Development program at the University of Guelph. Later on, she would like to work overseas once more, possibly in Haiti.